A GALLERY OF WOMEN

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A Gallery of WOMEN

THEODORE DREISER, 1871-1945

In Two Volumes

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VOLUME I

2v.

NEW YORK
HORACE LIVERIGHT
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I. Pitt
WITHDRAWN

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A GALLERY OF WOMEN

REINA

Reina

The home from which she came was a makeshift affair at best, with a mother who was soft and placative and sentimental and with no least grasp of life, and a semi-neurotic father of Dutch extraction who was little more than a leftover sprout of a decayed branch of a family tree that somewhere and at some time may have been something. Here (meaning a small town in our American northwest) he was a locksmith, and from all accounts an erratic one. He curled his mustachios upward and donned a dress suit once or twice a year. He thought he could play the violin. He told vile stories and seemed to like to shock his own children. He was described to me as a physical coward, a man who browbeat his wife (where he was afraid of other men). Being the irresponsible that he was, he shifted most of the burden of life to her, who made a large percentage of the living by running a rooming-house.

First impressions are keenest. When I first saw Reina I thought she was a silly, and yet not quite. That little lavender hat pulled down over her bobbed tow-colored hair (bleached to that shade, of course) and the lavender throw that accompanied it seemed to suggest a keen sense of harmony, as did the very light gray

suit reaching to but an inch or two below the knees. She had a habit of standing as a boy will, legs far apart, head thrown back and gray-blue eyes dancing with an irresistible zest for life. At least, I said, she is alive—very much so. And then the really funny stories, always vulgar but laugh-provoking in spite of anything one might think, and leaving one wondering how she could have the effrontery to tell them so calmly. It seemed to imply disrespect and at times even a low estimate of oneself. And yet there was no least trace of pruriency in her stories; rather, it was a coarse and yet healthy sense of the ridiculous which prompted her. Let us say that she was unconsciously and at times even charmingly vulgar, which may seem to be a paradox but is not.

Rhoda, the elder half-sister, was a really beautiful girl, intelligent and very clever. Beautiful enough to be a figure of sorts in the movies, she was still sweet enough to retain the natural charms of a temperament that was as yet vague but beauty bent. She had not become hard or bold and pushing. Hers was a nature that craved the perpetuation of all home-ties and connections if possible. You are to remember that Rhoda had not seen Reina for nearly five years, herself having married and removed from her native city five years before. Since then Reina had married.

For months before meeting her I had been hearing of the interesting if not wonderful Reina. She was young, pretty, bubbling with life, a good horsewoman.

She was affectionate and sisterly, and was now married to a young managing lumberman. They had had a little home in some interior lumber district in Washington, but Reina, accustomed as she was to the metropolitan delights of Spokane and Seattle, soon grew tired of this backwoods life and fled, riding on a caboose to a main-line station some forty miles away. The husband, seemingly unable to live without her, had thrown up his connection with the lumber business, which was earning him four thousand a year, and had followed her. Twice in a married life of not more than three years she had left him in this way because the conditions surrounding the thing he chanced to be doing were not to her taste. And in both instances he had dropped everything and followed her, hoping to induce her to come back to him. Temperamentally, apparently, he needed her. After knowing her for some time and realizing what a fool she was in some ways and what a pest she might prove to some men in almost every way, and knowing him too, as I did then, I could still see how he might like and even need her. She had health, energy, humor and youthfulness, at least, and probably represented those qualities to him. When things were going against them, though, instead of being an aid or a comfort, she could be very dour, nasty, really.

When I met Sven he was not more than twenty-five, good-looking and ambitious. More, he was tactful and approachable, but without the advantages of

an education. His father, a Swedish farmer and dairyman, had apparently not believed in giving his children even a common school education. On the contrary, so I heard, he did his best to handicap them in this respect and in consequence Sven, who had run away from the farm at fifteen, used such English as he had heard spoken about him. Unless cautioned he would use *done* for *did, learned* for *taught, seen* for *saw,* and some other of those amusing Americanisms beloved by those who constitute the rank and file. Once he learned that he was using incorrect English, however, he preferred to remain silent or to imitate those who were speaking correctly, which was much more than could be said for Reina. Professionally he was a good lumberman, with a practical knowledge of woods and skilled in their preparation for the market. He was also, as I know, an excellent garage man, having mastered the mysteries of the automobile and being able to manage a garage when necessary. And he was the type of youth who was willing to do almost anything in order to get along.

But if Sven used bad grammar Reina used worse. Mrs. Malaprop at her worst wasn't a patch. "Say, ya know what I done yesterday? Gee, I wish ya coulda seen! I sure come near ballin' things up, all right, all right. It was this way, see. Me an' Sven was walkin' along Seventh Street when who should come chasin' but—well, give a guess. Monty! Sure. The same old Monty. An' in a nobby coat, too. Gee, you oughta

seen! That guy musta come into some money since I saw him last. An' it didn't make no difference to him that Sven an' me was married. He didn't get it, I guess. Ya can't learn that guy nothin'. Just grabbed me by the arm like he used to. 'Where ya goin'? Who's your friend?' Then I introduced him, an' Sven lookin' at me an' him all the time like he could swalla us. Can ya feature that? An' me always tellin' Sven there wasn't nobody could get fresh with me! Well, I come pretty near cashin' in then, but I had to laugh afterwards. But I got away with it. 'Here,' I says, 'do ya wanta get hurt? This ain't schooldays no more. Meet my husband, Sven, see?' Then he savvies an' gets awful polite an' nice like. An' Sven he softens a little because I ring in that Monty's father has money an' that Monty might be lookin' fer sompin to invest in, an' in a little bit they gets to talkin'. But can ya feature that stuff? An' Sven as jealous as he is? Well, when Sven wasn't lookin' ya bet I give Monty one look. 'Watcha doin'? Where ya goin'?' Ya bet I got it over to him that he'd better cut that stuff. Los Angeles ain't Spokane by a lot. But fer a minute there I thought there might be sompin rough. I sure did. Ya know Sven when he gets hot. Gee! I sure was curled up there for a second or two. But he thinks Monty went to school with me, so it's all right now, see?"

That was typical of much that I listened to for months and months, and in spite of anything and everything done to make her see the error of her ways.

Grammar was not to be impressed upon Reina, via correction, example or a stick. She could sit in upon the most perfect English spoken by as many as seventeen masters of the art and of a sudden burst in with "Whoja think me an' Sven seen?" or "Sven an' me was thinkin' . . ." And her sister, who because of her beauty had been able to marry an easterner from upper New York State of no little position and social training, although she had since left him and had managed to place herself in a more interesting walk of life, was made restless and unhappy by the sharp realization that since leaving home she had encountered conditions which had taught her much that her sister did not know.

But what a bubbling, enthusiastic temperament! It was easy to understand why a man, if he were not too well informed about grammar himself, might become very much attached to Reina. She had the pertness and inquisitiveness of a collie or a crow. And she was famishing for want of pleasures and luxuries such as others possessed but of which she had scarcely tasted as yet. Hence sister Rhoda's quaint little apartment in Hollywood, with its balconies, its flowers, its French windows, its Persian cat and chow dog, seemed to affect her as might strong drink a devotee of the demon rum. Gee!—her favorite expression. Everything was either "classy" or "swell" or "nobby" or, occasionally, "the cat's whiskers," or even—I blush to repeat a tithe of all the amazing expressions she used—"the

cat's pajamas." A reproduction of *The Pot of Basil* which ornamented one wall was "swell," but "Gee, she's kinda long-legged, ain't she?" and "A dress like that wouldn't go now. She musta lived somewhere where they wore them things." The nude figure of a woman draped about one side of a glass fish-bowl brought forth "Didja ever see a goldfish bowl like that before? Classy, eh? But she ain't got so much of a figure. Ya can see better'n that at Pantages any day."

"The trouble is, Reina," I suggested, "the artist lacked a suitable model. He should have had a graceful girl like you."

"Well, he oughta come with me. I could show him some that would make him leave his mother."

That Rhoda resented this brash and brassy line of comment, even while it amused her, was obvious from the first. She had been talking so much of the interesting Reina, thinking of her as she had been a few years before, whereas Reina had never been all or maybe any of the things she thought her. Most likely then she had judged her with scarcely any standards of comparison, whereas by now she had come upon many standards that had served to change her greatly. In consequence she scarcely knew what to think of Reina now, but was still too fond of her—the blood-tie and old memories affecting her too much—to be severely critical. At the same time she was greatly troubled lest I conceive all sorts of queer notions con-

cerning her and her parents, which was only partly true.

One of the things that interested me from the first was why so sober and industrious a man as Sven should have become so interested in Reina as to want to marry her and follow her about in this way. He was practical and quiet, determined to get along and provide Reina with all she desired, while Reina had no least sense of order or responsibility. Before and for some time after marrying Sven she had been the boon companion of a girl named Bertha, who appears to have been a combination of meal-ticket and attendant. This girl possessed the double advantage of looks and charm for men, two qualities which Reina admired intensely in any woman. Plus some means—Bertha, by the way, was the daughter of a well-to-do laundryman, from whom she could always get money and a goodly portion of which Reina could get from her, as well as some little from her own mother. With these several sums at their command, and because the home town from which they derived was small and Spokane and Seattle and Tacoma within easy striking distance, they were accustomed to race back and forth between these places, where relatives were supposed to reside. I judged that Reina supplied the initiative and daring and inspired these same in her companion. But why their parents should have permitted all this is more than I could understand. Careful questioning of Reina from time to time (her pro-

spective historiographer, you see) elicited the information that her mother thought that when they went to Seattle or Spokane or Tacoma she stayed with Bertha's relatives, whereas Bertha, in dealing with her own parents merely reversed this fabrication.

For something like a year and a half, which covered Reina's pre-nuptial contact with Sven, Bertha and Reina were almost always together. They went about with men, but according to Reina and in so far as she was concerned, not to do wrong but to get automobile rides, free dinners, trinkets and entertainment generally. For Bertha she made no claims. Often they were placed in perilous positions from which it took the greatest tact and craft to extricate themselves. The perils of Pauline were as nothing. The principal of these perils had arisen, as I soon saw, from the penchant of both for entering cars of youths who would then proceed to drive to some lone if not exactly forsaken spot where they would proceed to make advances which at least Reina, if one could believe her, was not willing to accept. Thus one night during a ride from Tacoma to Seattle in a taxi, a distance of thirty miles, they were attacked at a lonely point on the road by the chauffeur and a friend who had been brought along. The ruse by which they managed to escape would not bear publication, but the genuine perils of the situation would interest any one. Once out of the car they ran through the darkness into the woods, where in the depths they were guided to a

cottage by a lighted window. The chauffeur and his friend, in search of them, once passed within a foot of the place where they were crouching but did not actually stumble over them. Once having gained the cottage the girls remained there until morning and then proceeded to Seattle.

Because of Bertha's generosity and worship of her, as well as what she gained in entertainment and trinkets by the adventures, there was set up in Reina's mind, I think, the thought that life was an easy game, or should be, and that somebody, somewhere, would always provide her with the comforts of existence as she conceived the same. Her interest in Sven, therefore, when he came upon the scene, was in part based on this philosophy. But so attractive was he to her that eventually he succeeded in interrupting and finally partially destroying this friendship with Bertha. Just the same and even when I knew Reina some three years later whenever things were not going to her taste it was to Bertha and the old gay days that she was always reverting or thinking of returning to. And it was Bertha whom Sven disliked and feared most of all, I think.

But as a study in *dolce far niente,* when she was about and planning though not as yet executing some new mischief, Reina was all that the picture required. When left alone she might sit for hours in a comfortable chair or before her sister's three-panel mirror, twiddling her thumbs or rearranging or clipping or

tinting her hair, rouging her lips and cheeks, touching up her eyebrows and eyelids, and perfecting her facial toilet generally. Sometimes she would spend hours in trying on her sister's hats or dresses and looking at herself in a tall mirror and call to me or any one to see. "Swell, eh?" or "Classy, what?" She would lie abed of a morning, regardless of what any or all others might be doing, but by late afternoon or night she would be up and ready for some form of entertainment, to be provided by Rhoda, Sven or myself. And sometimes, though not often, she would help Rhoda prepare dinner if she could find no easy way of getting out of it, but always making herself more of a hindrance than a help so as to warn against future requests.

As a rule, however, there were no dinners prepared here. The restaurants were far more interesting to Reina, as they were to Rhoda, for that matter; but it was always Reina who would suggest a restaurant whether she had a dime or not. What about so and so's? Didn't they have dancing there? And wasn't it considered "swell" or "chick"? Well, so oriented or directed by hints, I might take both. Whereupon dinner over, and although at the time neither she nor Sven had any money for such things, he having come to this new city solely because she had broken up his connection elsewhere, she would still suggest the theater or a swimming pool or a concert, and apparently with never a thought that expense might be a factor.

Somebody had to pay, so why should she think? More, what were men for if not to pay? They had to have girls like her, didn't they? "Betcha life." In consequence, she would usually do her best to heighten the expense, although, to do her justice, she certainly added to my entertainment, thus embarrassing Sven, if not me, greatly, because he was unwilling to accept invitations unless he could at least pay his share. But that had nothing to do with Reina's calculations. She wanted to be entertained, and she was prepared to blink the sources of the supply as long as the entertainment was forthcoming.

All this by way of introduction. Once they were settled in Los Angeles—and, by the way, Rhoda's charming apartment caused Reina instanter to become openly dissatisfied with anything Sven could offer, and he had very little to offer just then—she made herself all but a permanent guest in her sister's home, and with scarcely so much as an invitation or a by-your-leave. For was not Rhoda her sister? And what are sisters for, pray? And Rhoda being one who attached almost much too much to blood kinship there was very little need of an invitation. Reina came and was lovingly and generously treated always, which was a mistake, as I saw it. For there was Sven, his difficulties and needs. And certainly Reina owed him something. Yet in spite of his needs and wishes and Reina's obligations as well as her own obvious lack of that perfection of beauty which made her sister so acceptable to the moving

picture grandees about the various studios, still it was she, not Rhoda, who at once decided that she also was cut out for that work and her sister who generously supported her in her aspirations. And why not? Didn't men like her? Wasn't she as clever as any one? Of course. Rhoda was earning from two to three hundred a week when she worked, sometimes more. Why couldn't she, Reina, also tap this golden dribble? The only things that stood between her and her goal were (1) Sven—her marital or household duties to him which she never fulfilled anyhow and (2) the various difficulties which Rhoda in her time had met and conquered. In short, like Rhoda, she would have to begin at the bottom as an extra, and that at seven-and-a-half a day—not forty and fifty, as Rhoda now received. She would have to get up as early as six or seven and be at the studio, made up, not later than eight-thirty. She would have to provide her own clothes and make-up and show considerable interest in and enthusiasm for the work—all of which threw a heavy wet blanket over the original fires of her ambition.

For Reina was one for whom there was never any real, constructive effort. She was a parasite by nature, and for that affliction there seems to be no cure. Her mind was not constructive; there was apparently not a trace of anything in it anywhere which related to building anything, for herself or others. Things happened; they were not brought about by the efforts of any one. Luck was the great thing, luck and gifts.

Never was it to be expected that one seek to make anything come to pass via the humdrum process of labor. Never! Bunk! All was to be sunshine, blue seas, waving awnings, ice cream, balcony dinners, automobile rides, clothes in the newest mode, dancing and cheerful friends. Anything less than this was an imposition on the part of either man or nature, but principally man. A man, if one is so gracious as to marry him, should provide all these things forthwith; otherwise he is a bonehead and worthless, solid ivory. If one has relatives of any means they should do as much; otherwise, why relatives? Such relatives owe it to all their kith and kin, but more especially to the one holding the above views, to provide him or her with joy and plenty. Reina held such views and was just like this, albeit she could be most agreeable so long as things were provided in sufficient quantity and to her taste.

Nevertheless and notwithstanding these traits, the moment she expressed the thought that she would like to enter upon this work her sister offered to take her about and introduce her to such directors and assistants as she knew, albeit she did talk to Reina of Sven, and how, unless she paid more attention to him, all this was most likely to end in marital destruction for both. Only Reina would never hear of Sven as an obstacle to anything. Not only that but now, as Rhoda also pointed out, such introductions to any one really earnest to enter upon this film work should most certainly prove of the greatest help and Reina must be sure to take ad-

vantage of them,—make them count. Just the same, and apart from going with Rhoda on one or two mornings when she did not have to get up too early, this proffer was neglected. These extremely early hours were too much for her. Not only that, but and although she was previously instructed that she must be prepared to endure the slights and snubs and insults and rank overtures even of nearly all connected with the great film industry in any official capacity, from the sixth assistant doorman up, still the information did not take. She was told, for instance, that if any of the directors or actors or what not were really interested, she might reasonably expect that they would attempt to ingratiate themselves by all sorts of unmeant promises, only Reina was not to listen. Rather she was to go on about her work,—kidding them as much as possible, and if that failed and she really could not get rid of them or endure it, well, . . . quit. Yet two visits made in this manner, and with but one or two side ventures of her own, and Reina was cured.

"What! Me fall fer them guys? And them makin' me wait around all day before they'll even letcha see anybody. Ya bet them guys ain't goin' to pull any of that raw stuff on me. An' I told 'em who I was, too, an' who sent me. Did that get me in? It did not. That little snit over at the Metro Studio gate just looked at me an' wouldn't even take my name. Said Mr. —— was busy. An' the same with that smart aleck

over at Lasky. I never seen such freshies in all my life, anyhow." And then came a long and pyrotechnic picture of what she would do to any of them if they really "got fresh" with her. They needn't think that because they had some squeak connection with the movies they could put anything over on her. Far from it. Of course, now, if a man was a regular fella and conducted himself as such, coming up to a girl with respect and ingratiating himself maybe by an invitation to dinner or an automobile ride—well, if he looked all right, that might be different. Sometimes a guy like that might turn out to be all right. . . . I often sat and laughed and egged her on, just to be permitted to enjoy this ebullience; for that was what it was, sheer animal spirits and a crazy kind of imagination and zest for life running wild.

But one thing she did decide upon, and that the most unreasonable, of course. Sven must get a place in Hollywood, where rents for small apartments furnished ranged from seventy-five for the poorest and smallest to two and three hundred and up for the better and more spacious ones. None the less, one of these for Sven, who, as I had gathered, had been rather hard-pressed by her vagaries in the past, and at this very moment, was for taking a smaller place downtown where rents were less and so shaping their lives to match his salary, which was then only forty a week or thereabouts. He was working as night man in a garage until he could get something better. "You wanta remember,

Reina," I heard him caution her within twenty-four hours after their arrival, "that we haven't any too much money now and we'll just have to go slow. We can't live in Hollywood on nothing." And so the place they were compelled to take was not to her taste. At the other extreme, really. Yet why couldn't Sven do better? Wasn't he a man, and hadn't she married him? She had caught a glimpse of Hollywood now, and regardless of means an immediate way must be found to stay there or there would be few sweet smiles for him.

Sven not being able to do better at the time, and she being in no way concerned to add to the exchequer, she took out her pique in loafing about her sister's place in Hollywood, while the latter worked and worked hard. Also nightly, while Reina slept, Sven cleaned and repaired cars and looked after the garage, which was never closed. This meant that he had to sleep by day. But instead of that arousing a proper sympathy for one so industrious it seemed to irritate Reina because of what she considered either his dullness or his stubbornness. Why couldn't he get a day job, anyhow? What was the use of any man working at night when there was day work to be had somewhere? He needn't work in a garage; he understood other things. Besides, if he didn't, he ought to. In vain did the industrious and really handsome Sven point out that because of the low state of their finances he had to take what he could get at the moment. She did not like that.

Time was the essence of her contract with him. He must hurry and do better by her. Debarred from such comfort as Rhoda enjoyed, she felt outraged. Besides, at night, just when they might go out for a little fun, Sven had to go to work. And in the morning when she wanted to sleep late, in he came fresh from his work and waking her up. The fact that he was considerate enough to breakfast before he came home was nothing to the point. He chose to work at night instead of during the day, and for little enough at that. He should look about and get something that paid more. One thing he pointed out to Rhoda not long after they arrived was the fact that it was because of Reina that he had to take the work and small salary they were now living upon. She would not stay where he had been able to make big money, not even long enough for him to get a real start and go into business for himself, which was his great hope.

The upshot of this was that Rhoda, sympathizing with Reina on the ground that she was young and hungry for life and had never really had anything, and yet sympathizing with Sven quite as much, was anxious to see them comfortable and hence was full of helpful suggestions. Reina ought to be more considerate of Sven. Sven ought to get day work if he could. It wasn't right to leave her all alone at night. To make things a little easier for them she first gave Reina a hundred dollars or so for her own use and then offered to lend Sven something to go on in case he would drop

what he was doing and look for day work or find an interest in some lumber concern, which same he was fully competent to manage. Also she suggested that he get better rooms, even if she had to make up the difference. And if he found the right sort of company in which to invest she would lend him the money to make the investment. When he got on his feet he was to get a car so that they could see something of the world in which they had so summarily injected themselves.

Sven, being the sort of youth he was, was all honest gratitude and anxious to make the most of this windfall. Forthwith he proceeded to spend most of his daytime sleeping hours in looking up one and another of the many advertised opportunities. Eventually he uncovered one in which, for the sum of one thousand cash invested and the sale of a certain number of shares that must be sold and the taking over of a number for himself, to be paid for piecemeal, he was to receive the title and assume the duties of secretary of a lumber company. He was to have a polished oak desk with his name on it, as well as his name on the door. Also a salary of sixty-five dollars, to begin at once. Rhoda approving when all this was duly laid before her, he proceeded to close the deal and to carry out the details of his part of the contract. Needless to say, Sven being cautious and careful and rather clever when it came to things of this sort, he was soon well along on the path toward a moderate competence. At once he began

planning the construction of a number of small houses, to be sold for three thousand and which were to net him or his company nearly one thousand. He and Rhoda were to make real money in the future. She would never regret having aided him. And I am sure that he meant all he said.

But I wish you might have seen Reina once these plans had passed the tentative stage and bid fair to come about, or after Sven had actually assumed his duties as secretary and they had moved to three rooms farther out, where there were flowers and a lawn and a better view. The airs! The assurance and swelling superiority! Sven was now the secretary and part owner of a lumber company. And they were living in a three-room apartment with a balcony on the borders of Hollywood. And they had a small car, a second-hand something, but not bad-looking, for Sven was a judge of bargains in that field. Yet instead of interesting herself in Sven and what he was doing, she was now most interested to know what they could do in order to entertain themselves. At once, of course, they must motor to Santa Barbara, ditto to Big Bear, ditto to Riverside, ditto to San Francisco, ditto to Bakersfield. And wouldn't it be fine if they had a piano—or a new victrola, anyhow—and Rhoda would come and bring some of her friends and they could dance, etc., etc., etc. Everything, as you see, for Reina; very little for Sven. And yet I doubt if I ever saw a happier young man, for a while, anyhow. By Reina's own admission

he was up early and back late, following closely the possibilities that were now before him. Within the space of a very few weeks he had been able to dispose of a large number of shares of stock. Also he was able to handle quite all the details of shipment and delivery, while others sold the lumber ordered from northern firms. His one mistake, if it was a mistake, was his desire to clear off too quickly the cost price of the shares allotted him so that by the next year he and Reina might have plenty to live on. His mistake, if any, was in thinking that Reina might be persuaded or prompted to wholeheartedly help him do this.

Most assuredly that dream was not well-founded. I never saw a young wife do less for an ambitious husband and expect more. The garish moving picture atmosphere of Hollywood, as well as the summery sweet-to-do-nothing mood of Los Angeles as a whole, seemed to get into her veins and make her absolutely intolerant of anything save idleness and pleasure. Her main interest was to parade the smart shops, near which she lived, or to linger at her sister's in Hollywood, where, when she was not meditating or planning outings or decorating her face before a mirror, she would sit at the piano and in an ultra and hence amusingly romantic voice give vent to exaggerations of the sentiment in *Dear Old Pal of Mine, Old Pal, Why Don't You Answer Me?, Avalon, Macushla,* and such other romanticisms. And from here, with her sister and occasionally myself as pilots, and while her husband

worked, she would joyously set forth to a swimming pool, a horseback ride, a beach restaurant or an automobile ride, yet without a thought of including her young husband, and even at times resenting, by a gesture or a mouth, the mere mention of him, as though he were nothing at all in her young life. When taxed with this, as well as her whole attitude toward Sven and marriage, she denied it. At first she denied being indifferent to him, then later charged him with being unnecessarily grouchy wherever she was concerned; too set on a humdrum existence. He wanted to work all the time and never play. Why, instead, couldn't he work, and give her all she wanted and play, too? Finally she admitted that she might be changing or that he had changed. He wasn't as light-hearted as he used to be. He seemed to think there was nothing in the world to do except work. He was stingy and didn't seem to think she needed to do anything but wait for him. When I pointed out that he seemed to be making a gallant fight for a place, and under trying conditions, she paid a genuine tribute to his industry and rather blamed herself. She "guessed" she wasn't cut out for marriage, anyhow, that she just couldn't stand humdrum things. Sometimes she did like Sven very much, was even crazy about him; at other times she felt as though she hated him. He could be so nasty. Once they had quarreled and he had threatened to strike her, or had struck her, and she had flung something at him and had cut his eye. Another time he had

struck her after they had quarreled about her having gone to a place she had promised not to go to. Just now he wanted her to live just so until he got on his feet, and she didn't want to live that way.

The pointlessness of the outsider mingling in the affectional affairs of those unhappily mated is too obvious to need comment here. I ventured no advice and made no pleas, and I was not greatly surprised when, one morning, Reina arrived at her sister's apartment with the announcement that she and Sven were "through,"—that she wasn't going to stay with that old grouch any longer. Rather she would pawn her rings and return to Spokane where her mother now lived and where, in company with Bertha, she was certain to find something to do. Her underlying thought, as I suspected at the time, was that Rhoda would not let her go. And she was right. Rhoda suggested that she come there first for a few days, or go to a hotel and pretend that she had left for the north and see what Sven would do. Reina was to write a letter and have it mailed in San Francisco, saying she was on her way north. A little money was given her to stay at a nearby hotel. In the meantime Sven had returned home and found a letter such as only Reina could write, a most amazing affair, concocted in Rhoda's presence, which told him that she had gone and would not return. She had taken all her things. He need not bother Rhoda, for she was not going to Rhoda. But it seemed to me that Sven was

very much put upon and that Reina did not know what she wanted.

Nevertheless, Sven did bother Rhoda, and at once. He was in many ways a simple and confiding person and did not at all understand the woman he had married. Yet in spite of all her fantastic notions and her marked indifference to his well-being, he still cared for her as any one could see—that silly, notional girl. It was enough to cause one to wag one's head in desperation.

Sven called that evening to see if Rhoda knew where Reina was. His hope, written in his eyes, was that she was there. In a straightforward way he proceeded to place before Rhoda the sum and substance of his wrongs. He loved Reina and always had and always would, he thought, but she knew the state of his finances. She knew how hard he had tried before coming to Los Angeles and why he hadn't got along better than he had. Every time he was just getting a start somewhere she would get dissatisfied and leave him, and here was the same thing again. He was just getting a new start, and now she had left him again. The big thing now was to get his stock paid for so that the interest it yielded should be paid him instead of being charged off against his debts. The trouble was that he had been trying to make his salary of sixty-five dollars pay all expenses, but that wasn't enough, it seemed. Reina was for spending all he made the moment he

made it, and even more, while he was for saving it in case anything happened.

Personally I felt sorry for him. More, I respected him, and so did Rhoda, and to my intense satisfaction she saw the point and sympathized with him. Although the blood-tie pulled strongly she wanted Sven to be helped and she wanted Reina to help him. She was for a compromise in some form and so she and Sven, and she and Reina, entered upon long and tautological discussions. The substance of all this was that Sven should not throw up his place. Also that with her aid he might do just a little better by Reina in the matter of living, assuming that she came back. She had never had anything in her life and he knew how that was to a girl. And she was here in Hollywood, where there were many things to make her envious and unhappy. Couldn't he afford to get a still better place? Sven was fond of Rhoda and admired her common sense as well as her beauty, besides being very grateful to her. He promised that if Reina would come back and be nicer to him he would do better too. He would get a larger place and a better car. He had seen one, a Buick, which he could get on time for two thousand dollars, and then he and Reina could go about more. Perhaps he hadn't done as well as he should, but he had been trying to get a start so that both of them could have a better time later on. Sven left, full of hope for the future, though Rhoda still maintained that she did not know where Reina was.

He was scarcely gone, however, when in walked Reina, anxious to know what he had proposed to do. She was full of bravado until she saw how Rhoda felt about it. Her one thought seemed to be that so long as Sven was amenable she could use him about as one would a doormat. "I'll show him he can't treat me any old way," she began. "He needn't think he can treat me as though I wasn't deserving of nothing—" ("Anything, Reina!") "—Well, then, anything. Nasty old rooms down there! An' eating in cafeterias! I won't do it. He's makin' money now, an' he can just spend a little of it. He needn't think I'm goin' to live on nothin' all my life."

But since Rhoda inclined toward Sven in this argument and Reina really depended on her, a compromise had to be reached; otherwise Reina would have had to carry out her threat to leave Hollywood, which was exactly what she did not want to do. After some bluff and bluster, in which she sought to make it appear that she had really gone to San Francisco but owing to the plea of Rhoda had returned to Los Angeles, she did return to Sven, who proceeded to do his best to make things more agreeable for her. They then celebrated their reunion by a dinner to Rhoda, at which they made quite a picture of loving domesticity.

But once the interest of the new place had subsided a bit Reina was to be found most of the time in the apartment in Hollywood, dreaming as before. While Rhoda worked and schemed hourly as to how to ad-

vance herself, haunting the studios and practicing dancing, delsarte, elocution, make-up and characterization, Reina was dreaming or playing the piano or waiting for her to return so that they might go somewhere. I often wondered what Sven was thinking of it all. To be sure, Rhoda, anxious for the welfare of the twain, did her best to iron out the rough places. Whenever possible she was for having Sven to the apartment for dinner and for a drive in her car, or to distant resorts over the week-ends, even though Sven objected most definitely to accepting that for which he could make no adequate return.

It was plain that in spite of what Reina thought Sven ought to do for her, and what he lacked in the way of ability to provide, and what she was entitled to as his wife, she still made no great effort to fulfill her part of the marital relation. She was much interested by the admiration of other men and what wealth in the hands of another male might do for her, in case she chose to command the same. There were nights when Sven was detained at the office and on such occasion, if Rhoda was free from her work, Reina was for persuading her to go somewhere, usually to a swimming pool, where by reason of the large crowds that attended and the attractive bathing suit she wore it was possible to attract no little attention. Once there it would not be long before she could be seen flirting with some good-looking youth or man, making the most of her golden opportunities and her figure, which was far from un-

attractive. And unless Rhoda protested she might even disappear for an hour or two, to loaf in some nearby restaurant or ice cream parlor, while her sister waited. Rhoda was not inclined to quarrel with her on this account; she had the feeling that Reina might be deciding that she had made a mistake and was looking for an easy way out. But, as time proved, it did make a difference in her estimate of Reina. I think she felt that Reina was temperamentally unfitted for marriage with any one.

Nevertheless, because of Rhoda more than anything else, I believe, her charming surroundings and possessions, her standing in the film world, and the fact that she had helped him make his latest beginning, Sven stood his ground for a time, or, rather, endured the slights that were so persistently put upon him. But after a time and when the worm had endured all it could, it turned. Late one Saturday night there was a terrific storm in the Bergstrom household, and that very night Reina appeared at her sister's abode, much the worse nervously for the argument. "Whadaya know?" Sven had quarreled with her for coming in late, even when he was working late himself, and had told her—well, needless to say what he had told her. But among other things he had said that unless there was a change, and a drastic one, he was through. She could go where she chose, and he would go his way. He was tired of being made a fool of. He would get a divorce, or she could get it. He

wouldn't contest it. But unless she there and then made definite promises of reform which she intended to keep, she must leave or he would. . . . With all her memories of past victories fresh upon her, flights and reunions, there was but one thing that Reina could do: flee, of course, to let him see once more whether he could do without her. She had learned that he could not. He would follow and bring her back.

But this time there was no agitated and nervous Sven telephoning to know whether she was there. Complete silence in that quarter; and on the part of Rhoda dissatisfaction and a growing contempt; and on the part of Reina, for the time being anyhow, excited cackling. Sven had said this, and Sven had said that, and he had done or had not done thus and so. I marveled that anyone could have so poor a grasp of the human amenities as to think and act as she was thinking and acting and then blame another person. Fortunately the attitude of Rhoda was different now. Blood-ties or no blood-ties, she had come to see that there was something to Sven's side of the story.

Rhoda did not press this conclusion just then, but after a few days, in which Reina lay about waiting for the surrender of Sven, she began to take up the matter of her future with her. Either she must think of something she would like to do and be about the business of doing it, or she must return to her mother. Everybody worked; why not she? "You mustn't think that because I'm your sister," went on Rhoda, "and

because I'm fond of you I can take care of you always. I can't, and I wouldn't if I could. I don't think it would be a good thing for you. You're old enough now to decide what it is you want to do. If you don't want to live with Sven you ought to decide what kind of work you can do and make a try for it. I am willing to help you get work, but I do feel that you ought to do something and not expect to idle about and do nothing while you wait to see what Sven is going to do."

Reina declared vehemently that she was not waiting for Sven and that nothing would induce her to return. She was going north. She had written to Bertha and to her mother. Nevertheless she sat about, and still no Sven. And still Rhoda bore with her as patiently as one person could with another. She waited almost a week before she again pointed out the folly of waiting for a man who was evidently not interested to pursue. She had not treated him well and could not expect him to run after her. She must find work or arrange in some way that he do something for her, which she assumed he might do, at least until Reina could do something for herself.

But then, to my astonishment, after this conduct and her indifference in the past and her various threats, the moment Rhoda had gone I heard her calling up the North and South Lumber Company and asking if she might speak with one Sven Bergstrom. He was not in, but without caring what I might be thinking, since I

was within earshot, she tried and tried, until finally she did catch him in. The burden of her message, once she had him, was that she wanted to see him, but by no means was this so directly conveyed. On the contrary, and apparently in the face of small encouragement from him, after endless roundabout hints, she was compelled to say that she was going to be downtown about six o'clock and that if he happened to be near where she was going to be she would be glad to see him. After this telephone conversation was over I began to rally her concerning her previous determination and all the things she had seemed to think were wrong with him. Her calm reply was that she still thought as she had but that she needed some money and he must supply it. He wasn't going to get off so easy, you bet. The very least he could do was to give her enough to live on until she found something to do.

If I were to devote one hundred pages to verbatim transcripts of subsequent conversations held between her and Sven, and which same she invariably forced upon him and all of which he appeared to wish to avoid, you would gather but faintly the strangely illusive and illogical and almost pointless processes of her reasoning. Her persistent statement was that at bottom she did not care for Sven and that she did not want to live with him, but that she did want some money and proposed to get it if she had to sue him for divorce. But her conversations with him would have convinced any one

that at bottom she really did care for him and that she was lying roundly when she said she did not. Her voice and even her manner over the telephone, as I now noted with astonishment, had a cooing, coaxing, pleading quality, which she seemed to think would have some effect on Sven. Yet even then or immediately afterwards she would assure me that she hated him. Also she would openly flirt with men who appeared to be drawn to her and who would follow her in their cars and solicit her company from time to time. And betimes, and much to her sister's chagrin, she would be let off at her sister's door by some individual in a most impressive turnout, and with whom she chose to linger and talk. The quarrels which followed some of these adventures between her and Rhoda were quite sharp enough to indicate a change in Rhoda. Finally, after she had gone to her husband's office one evening and stayed away the entire night, she was ordered out by Rhoda who did not understand until Reina herself explained that it was with Sven she had been and that Rhoda could call up and find out, which was done. After that she was readmitted but only after stating that she cared for Sven and was going back.

And she did return to him—because it was the easiest thing to do, I presume. And he, if you will believe it, seemed delighted to have her back. Yes—so it was. And soon there was a new and still better apartment and a better automobile. Indeed, there was something

helplessly compulsory about many things that both of them did, as though in spite of his best or worst sense and hers each found it impossible to break with the other, the matter of a little support not really being at the bottom of it. She wanted to rule him, I think, and found it hard to believe that she could not. And he was getting to the place where he did not want to be ruled, yet could not quite break with her.

But then of a sudden came the end of all of this. For one day, about a week before their final separation, there was an accident. The new car in which Reina had posed, calling at least once or twice a day to show off, was crashed into by a street car and put out of commission. It was so badly damaged that not less than four hundred dollars was required to restore it, and about four weeks must elapse before they could have it again. Worse, a smaller and cheaper car had now to be used, Sven having sunk all his spare cash in this larger one. Not only that but a legal contest would also have to be entered upon before any claim would be awarded, because the accident, as it turned out, was as much Sven's fault as the motorman's. This Sven himself admitted but gave as his excuse that he was worried and brooding at the time. Worse still, the car had been only partly insured, Sven having been too busy to have that matter properly attended to. And so Reina, much to her dissatisfaction, was reduced once more to a very commonplace car.

Whether this had anything to do with the final

catastrophe I have often wondered. One thing is sure: Reina became most irritable in her manner toward Sven, claiming that he had not managed things right or the accident would not have happened. Also that she would not ride or live as she was now being compelled to. Yet Sven, as I noticed, was courteous and considerate and even apologetic at times. To me he seemed a little sad as he explained how it had all come about. He was thinking of something and had absentmindedly swung in front of a car which was coming too fast to stop. That frank admission, even among friends, infuriated Reina. It seemed "crazy" to her. She wanted him to deny all responsibility and sue the company, as well as to play injured and exact damages on that score. But Sven would do none of that, and went about his business as before.

And then one day he telephoned her that he would not be home before eleven or twelve that night. Curiously enough, instead of running to Rhoda's as usual, she decided to retire and read. But midnight came, and no Sven. In the morning, surprised and concerned at his absence, she called up the office and learned that he was not there, that he had left at five-thirty the day before. Further waiting and searching revealing nothing, she ran to Rhoda. But Sven was really gone. His business affairs appeared to be in good order, except that as time went on it developed that he had recently contracted a number of debts via loans and expenditures for things bought on time—the car, furniture,

dresses and jewelry for Reina. The loans were against his salary and the stock in his possession but not yet paid for. Also certain cash sales of stock had not been accounted for. But, strangely enough, the other officers of the company did not seem much concerned, wishing only, as they said to Rhoda who went to see them, that he would come back. He was too good a man to lose. They explained that Sven had seemed troubled recently. Also that they feared that it might be about a woman. A woman had been seen entering his office at night. This sent Reina off on a wild goose chase, but the mysterious woman of whom she was instantly insanely jealous proved to be herself.

Followed such mental vagaries and variations on the part of Reina as set one casual observer, myself, no less, to whirling mentally like a pinwheel. Realizing, as time went on, that by her follies and indifference she had driven from her a man who was of some commercial ability and that she was now left high and dry without a penny, Reina appeared to be shuttled between fear and rage, a desire to weep, I think, and a desire for revenge; between the thought that Sven had not considered her worth even a good-by, and the thought that she had miscalculated her hold over him. Another irritating and enraging thought appeared to be that Rhoda and I and perhaps particularly I looked upon her as fairly paid out for her airs and indifferences. At first she was inclined to think that an accident might have happened to Sven. But opposed to

this was the fact that he had called her up so soon before disappearing. Also that on the day of his disappearance he had reassigned to the rightful owner not only the damaged car, which was partially paid for, but the smaller car that had been loaned him. Also his small bank account had been canceled, which proved that he had really left her. His indifference to her last departure might have warned her that a change was impending if not actually at hand.

Came now a period of brooding and mooding, coupled with such curious developments as would tax an alienist to display, the sort of thing that happens in real life and seldom if ever creeps into romance. In connection with an hysterical after search there appeared upon the scene a detective who fell in love with her, a queer, showy, self-opinionated dandy connected with the office of the district attorney. His chief desire seemed to be to prove Sven a criminal, not that he should be punished but that he should not venture to return to Reina. And Reina, being in need of money, was inclined to make use of this sleuth, not to the extent of favoring him in any way but in order to have the use of his car, some cash, luncheons and dinners, while she followed up clues. But all the while she was amusingly critical of him, declaring that she would throw him over when she was through with him and expose him to his superiors if he proved obstreperous. Betimes she would play doleful melodies on the piano and seem lost in sad thoughts. Again, she would break

forth into loud denunciations of her absent spouse. But she also must have realized that her attitude and her extravagance had driven him away and that she was the cause of his petty defalcations, if defalcations they might be called. The company, when appealed to by the detective, refused to make any charge.

Following the day when she finally abandoned Mr. Morello, the detective, bidding him begone and not annoy her any more, she was at a loss what next to do, for some form of employment was looming straight ahead, as troublesome a promontory as she ever wished to see, you may be sure. But while she meditated, her sister was working, and this now began to weigh upon her. All at once and in spite of various kindly overtures on the part of Rhoda she decided to transfer herself and effects to a room in the very heart of the city, where henceforth, as she said, she would live. Also she was going to get something to do, "You bet," the very first thing that came to hand. She wasn't going to hang around trying to get into the movies. It was too uncertain. So one day, in spite of an invitation to stay longer, she left and thereafter was seen only at such times as Rhoda besought her, which was often. But she did take the first work that offered, that of elevator starter in an office building.

And then soon and much to my amusement we began to hear of new friendships with girls who were so far below the walk to which her sister aspired as to be disturbing, but who were no doubt suited to the

mind and mood of Reina at the time. These same were of that ignorant if not inexperienced flapper type which looks upon sex and the conquest of men as the end and beginning of all earthly interest. Yet I was never fully convinced that Reina was very much fascinated by them or their lives. Living among these girls now, however, and in order, possibly, to avoid boredom, she busied herself with them and their affairs for a time and seemed to be more at peace than before. Returning to her sister, betimes, she was constantly describing them as a sex-crazy "bunch" and their male friends as snipes with tin Lizzies, bootleg whisky and a little money. But sometimes even they appeared to bore her and she would appear at Rhoda's apartment with the thought written all over her that she would prefer to stay there, and yet refusing when she was asked. Yet as time wore on she seemed less determined to show Rhoda that she could make her own way in the world, and more determined to be friends with her; also her rage against her late husband subsided and there were times when she would speak of him and admit that she had made mistakes. "The trouble with me was," she once said simply and forcefully to me as she sat in Rhoda's boudoir and made a facial toilet with her sister's cosmetics, "I didn't know when I was well off. Sven wasn't such a bad fella. There's lots worse'n him, ya bet, an' I see it now."

"Oh," I laughed, "you see Sven in a new light now, do you?"

"Ya bet I do," was her frank admission. "Sven wasn't so bad. He was a little stingy but he was a hustler, all right, an' he woulda made money up there in Washington if I'd only helped him. An' it was the same with that garage business he had up there in Seattle. But I guess I musta been a fool then. Nothing ever seemed to satisfy me. I just couldn't bear the idea of stayin' in one place long. When I heard that Rhoda was doin' so well down here I just made up my mind to get Sven to come down here. An' of course I did."

"So you think you could get along with him now, do you?"

"Sure. I thought a whole lotta Sven. I was crazy about him once up there in Seattle, sometimes even after we got down here. But I got to wantin' too much, I guess, an' he was too easy with me. He'd never stand up an' fight. He'd rather go an' get me things when he couldn't afford 'em."

I looked at her, too pleased by this frank confession to wish to add anything. At last, as I said to myself at the time, she did see the point even if too late. But Sven had disappeared by then, and so far as I ever learned he never returned.

But in spite of this resurrected affection she went on in her ragbag way, seeking to make the most of her possibilities. One day she confessed to me that if she ever met another "fella" as sober and industrious and ambitious as Sven she would "nab" him, you bet. "An' ya bet I'll know how to act the next time. I've learned

sompin." The thought that she ought to sober down somewhat as well as marry again had apparently taken root in her decidedly flighty brain, or at least that she ought to attach herself in some way to some man with money or the ability to make it. And so she now began to hint to her sister that she be introduced to some one of character and standing, which same was not to be thought of, of course. A few *we was's* and *he done's* would most certainly have frightened off the most tolerant of possibilities. When she saw that Rhoda would have none of her commonplace friends and that she was in no haste to introduce her to the personalities with whom she was in contact, Reina began to set her cap on her own account for such as she thought might prove of the right caliber.

"Say," she appealed to me once, "tell me the name of a book that a fella that knows sompin would think was all right, will ya? I wanta carry sompin that'll make 'em think I know more'n I do. How's that, eh?" and she laughed. She could muster a grin that would melt ice, and it was that and her honest frankness about everything which attracted so many to her, myself among them.

"You're on," I said, reaching for *The Way of All Flesh,* the best on my shelf at the time.

"D'ya think this would make a fella that knows a lot think that I was up on good books?" she queried.

"Well, if that won't do it, nothing will. It depends

on how you talk about it, Reina. Unless you understand it you'd better not say too much, see?"

"Leave it to me to put over the wise stuff. I ain't givin' myself away. I'll read it first, see, an' what I don't understand I'll ask about." Once more that toothy grin. It was at such times that she became worth knowing, really charming.

For about a year thereafter, in which she worked first as an elevator starter, next as a telephone girl in charge of a switchboard (because "Startin' elevators is kinda common, dontcha think?") and finally as a clerk in a photographer's studio, because that was higher still, she was alive with stories of her adventures. For some reason—because of Rhoda, perhaps—she was determined to interest a man above the average, some one more interesting than Sven even, with whom she could be seen without having her friends think she was belittling herself; rather, with the thought that she was doing exceedingly well. Now it would be: "Gee, ya oughta seen the swell fella I met goin' over to Catalina last Saturday, me an' Marie. Oh, a swell guy! None of yer little snipes with their tin cars an' their talk of bootleg an' all that stuff. This was a real guy—big gray overcoat an' horn glasses an' a Paige turin' car with a California top. I saw him leave it at the garage before he come on. An' he was readin' a book—not then, ya know—he was just tellin' me about it. Didja ever hear of a book called *Divine Comedy,* or sompin like that? It's a novel, ain't it?"

"That's right, Reina. It's a novel."

"What's the name of the guy that wrote it—Danty?"

"Right again, Reina. He's a well-known writer. Henry A. Danty. You'll find his books in every library. He's one of our most popular authors. Everybody reads him. Why, they've done a lot of his stuff in the movies."

"Is that right? Ye're not kiddin' me, are ya?"

"Not for worlds. Ask any librarian. Henry A. Danty, author of *The Divine Comedy.*"

"That's it—that's the one. He was tellin' me about that one. People dead an' in hell, see, an' devils torturin' 'em. Gee, it was interestin'. He was tellin' me about a fella that was dead an' was—," and here followed her version of the agonies of Francesca and Paolo, because of their illicit earthly love, forever whirled in their Stygian tempest.

Yet again, it was another worthy citizen in tweed and raglan riding to his office of a rainy morning—"Oh, a swell fella. An' whadaya know, he's the general freight agent for one of these big steamship lines that runs between here an' South America. An' he was awful nice to me, too, ya bet. Wanted to know where I lived an' what I did—gee, an awful nice man. An' me an' him—" ("He and I, Reina,") "—well, he an' I, then, got to talking about the boats an' what they carry—coffee an' hides an' wool an' sugar—oh, lotsa things. An' he was tellin' me how they bring coffee an' hides an' wool down over the mountains there in little pack-trains made up of them there—ah—burros. An' how

little them Indians get. Gee, it was interestin', I wanta tell ya."

"I haven't any doubt of it. I wish I could meet him myself."

"Well, anyhow, I had that last book ya gimme, see? That was the way it started. He kep' lookin' at that, an' I kep' twistin' it around so as to be sure he seen what it was—" ("Saw, Reina,") "—well, saw, then. An' when we got downtown he ast me if he could come around an' see me some time an' take me out to dinner. Said he thought I was a nice girl, see, an' all that bunk. But I liked him, all right. A nice, big, serious fella he was,—big nice eyes. Them kind's different from the little snipes that are always chasin' after ya an' haven't got a bean. I'm offa that bunch fer life. A guy like that can learn ya sompin—" ("Teach, Reina,") "—well, teach, then."

But I might present as many as thirty such casual encounters that came to nothing apparently, and still not exhaust the roster. Reina was "nuts," as she said, to find some man who really amounted to something. And at last she did find a man of at least some ability, as I judged, "a—now—one of these here—now—efficiency experts—is that it?" According to Reina, he was fifty years of age and connected with an organization which sought to make over or improve technically and financially such firms as were not doing as well in the matter of economy and waste prevention as might be. I saw him but once, and that in

passing, a solid, contentious-looking person whose self-centered and defiant mien impressed me as more likely to drive off rather than encourage intimacies of a social or affectional nature. Yet Reina became friendly with him and in the course of time was to be seen seated at the wheel of the very elaborate car which she said was his. Beside her at times sat the master himself, in gray summer suit and cap, looking quite commercial and prosperous. Later this friendship appeared to have been cemented by a number of very solid and substantial gifts—a pair of jade earrings, a genuine gray squirrel coat, several throws with caps to match, shoes, lingerie, gloves and—but my memory fails me. At any rate, she was suddenly most fulsomely and yet not too loudly outfitted with many of the things she had been craving this long while.

And then one day, reclining in this same car and looking the picture of grandeur, she came to Hollywood to announce that she was all but ready to depart on a tour of the Selkirks in northwestern Canada—Lake Louise, Banff, the totem-villages, etc. "An' not only that," she went on, "but looka here," and she proceeded to fell me by bringing forth a very fat purse from which she extracted a small thin roll of fifty and one hundred dollar bills. "An' what's more, he's crazy about me. He says if I'll go to school an' polish up my grammar I'll be just as smart as anybody. An' I'm a-goin' to, too. I'm not always goin' to stick around here and be a dub, ya bet. I know sompin already,

an' ya just give me a year or two more an I'll know a lot more. Anyhow, I got this much—pretty good, eh?"

"You said it, Reina. You're the candy girl, all right. They can't keep a good man down, can they?"

"Ya betcha life they can't. An' I'm a-goin' to save my money from now on an' behave myself an' marry a real man, an' maybe in a few years I'll be somebody."

"That's the way to talk. But it looks to me as though you were somebody already. It isn't everybody that can go to Banff and Lake Louise in July."

"I'll tell the world!"

There was little that Rhoda could say or do. Her attitude toward Reina is best expressed by a speech often despairingly made after some such scene as this: "Well, I can't help it, can I? I've done all I can do. She's my sister and I can't help being fond of her, but I'm not responsible for her. She won't listen to me, and she never gets any of the points I try to make. She'll just have to live her own life, that's all. I'm sorry for her, but neither Sven nor mamma could do anything, either."

But to return to this scene. Rhoda had remained silent while Reina swaggered and talked, and now Reina turned to her:

"What's the matter? Don't ya think it's pretty good —all these nice clothes an' this trip an' everything?"

"Why, yes, I suppose so, if you want to go and really like him," commented Rhoda rather heavily. "And I

hope he really likes you and that it won't be just another of these silly adventures that you'll be sorry for afterwards. You might meet some one some day that you'll really care for, you know."

"Oh, I know. But I like him, all right. An' he said he never knew anybody that interested him as much as me. An' he's going to send me to school, too, to a seminary somewhere, see? Won't that be pretty good?"

"Cemetery, Reina, cemetery," I put in.

"Oh, now, ya hush. Guess I know, don't I?" Then with a burst of pent-up emotion and affection, genuine and unchanging for all her ragbag thoughts, she stepped forward and throwing her arms about Rhoda, kissed her good-by. Even tears,—a short shower. "An' I owe it all to you, Rhoda. Don't say I don't, 'cause I do. You've always been good to me. If it hadn't been fer you I never woulda come down here at all, an' I wouldn'ta got what I've got now." A few more tears. Then one last funny story. A burst of laughter. And then departure, with Rhoda gazing after her more astonished than ever. And myself, wondering where, in the long catalogue of the exceptions, she belonged. And at last deciding: on the Orpheum Circuit. Or in a farce.

But Rhoda . . . I turned to her. She was crying.

"Forget it," was all I could advise. "You can't help it, can you? She is as she is, isn't she? And if you're going to begin to cry over life you'll be crying all the

time. Besides, you'll ruin your make-up." But it was already ruined.

To return to Reina. One day about six weeks before her departure she and a friend had appeared at Rhoda's apartment in search of something she had left behind. Rummaging in a box which contained some letters written by Sven to her and her to Sven she came upon one and stopped to expatiate to her friend about the quarrels she and Sven had had and how she had left him three or four times and he had always followed. Then and in my presence she had asked her friend to read a particular letter, which she had written to Sven during one of their separations. The friend reporting that she thought it "swell," Reina volunteered: "Well, I thought it was, myself. But I didn't send it, because afterwards I thought maybe I didn't mean it. But I coulda. Sven always fell for anything like that. That's why I wrote it."

Interested in this palaver and seeing her toss the letter back in the box, I said: "Aren't you going to take it along, Reina?"

"Sure not. It ain't no good to me now."

"But I thought you said you cared for Sven?"

"Well, I did—a little. Still I didn't send it. Read it an' throw it in the wastebasket when ye're through with it. It'll make ya laugh, but I thought I meant it when I wrote it."

Thinking later of its possibly illuminating character,

I recovered it from the waste box where she had thrown it, and here it is:

DEAR SVEN:

As this has been such a wonderful night and I have stayed up late enjoying it I thought of you. Sven, it seems as though our 2 years of married life is a compleet failure. Its to bad but you have tried and I have tried but its gone, what our real love for each other, and no living person can be happy if love aint there can they. I know many times you think I was all to blame but Sven you can understand why I was cross and eritabel.

The last time we went back together was because I wasnt real sure I dident care for you and my longing to be with you I couldent understand, it was miserabel I had to have you. But now I know what I was lonesome for the Happy you use to be but I couldent find him and I was sorry and couldent live without you.

I know I am a dissapointment in your life and Sven its for the best even if a married duty calls one he or she cant respond if there true self wont let them.

At one time in our life together no woman could have been happier than me. I simply was wild with your love and never could such a thing as this happen. I feel sure you was the same but life acts queer sometimes. I never doubted you Sven in my life till you begun to hide things from me and lye once inawhile. But its one thing or another you have developed a different plain in life than I. or its that we are dissatisfied in one another neather of us have had a chance and now that yours has come I am still looking for mine.

Why can a person make another suffer so unless its hate or thoughtlessness. I always have tryed to make myself nasty when I was aking inside for you to be near me and for the kisses Ill never forget. Still I would rather live alone and cherish the love I had once than ever go back again and be dissapointed like we always have been. I know its hard on you too dont think Sven I have no heart at all altho it looks that way sometimes I feel for you and would help you gladly if I could I understand you better than you really know and one must be helpful to you to be appreshiated still thats alright every one expects that even me

Im so glad your work is helping you make a big success and there is no reason why you shouldent be way up in this world other men have made it self made and honest thats what I am hoping for you.

And now that your free of a married life and no its for the best theres no reason why you aint bound for the top. we are young yet and you may find some one would mean all the world to you then its time to think back we was right to quit and let our love find its mate.

So Sven please look at this thing the way I do and we will go on thru life just the same as we did before we met feeling there is someone who will care for everything we do.

Tell your folks Sven when you go home just how it was and that I always thought of them as my mother and father and wish them sinseer regards I am sure they wont condemn me at least I always feel they wont.

So I am sure Sven all the unhappy hours you put in with me will be forgot and Ill do the same starting a new sheet from today on. A divorce will be got as soon as I can

save up the money we will erace the 2 years off our life and start at the beginning again.

I had to write and get this problem off my mind its been hard but solved.

So good Bye Sven its my last to you. please forgive and forget knowing and feeling its the only way we can offer one another I will close with my sinserest wish of your bright future and loyalship in one respect as my husband.

May god forgive us both as ever

REINA.

And about five months after Reina's departure from Los Angeles, the following note arrived from Sven to Rhoda. The letter was posted from Calgary, Canada, but contained no address.

DEAR RHODA:

You'll think it's funny to hear from me but I owe you one thousand and here it is. Please don't tell Reina. I know you won't anyhow but I couldn't stand it with her. I couldn't make a go of it. After the automobile accident I got discouraged. It looked like things was against me and so I quit. But I have been doing fine lately. That's why I'm sending this. But before I had it pretty hard for a year there. I wish I could see your pretty little place again and talk with you. I could make you see how I feel. Don't think too hard of me. Reina didn't care for me any more and when I found that out I couldn't see any use in sticking. But I wish you all the luck in the world and I hope Reina gets along too. She will though. And I hope I do too.

SVEN.

OLIVE BRAND

Olive Brand

When I think of her I visualize the Wasatch Range that overlooks Salt Lake City, the great Mormon Temple, the Great Salt Lake. And somehow I think of the University of Utah, high upon a slope of that same range and overlooking the city, wherein her father occupied the chair of mathematics. In his spare hours he was by way of being a banker, as well as an elder or vestryman in one of the principal Baptist churches of the city. Also, I think of the home of Brigham Young, that, as rumor goes, was built for his favorite among his twenty-two wives. Also, I think of the long, quiet residence streets in one of which the home of her parents stood—very solemn and middle-western—and of the social prestige which early she gathered belonged to them as being connected with a university and a bank. Also, of the long, grave, bearded face of her father, whom once she declared she in no way understood, so solemn and profound was he, always. Also, of her mother, whom she described as vibrating nervously with thoughts of what was proper, what was socially best or correct, what people would say, and what she was to do in regard to this, that, and the other thing.

She told me that first she attended a nearby

ward school, and later went to the university in which her father taught. Also, that at the same time she was attending the services and Sunday School of the church of which he was a conspicuous ornament. But the various thoughts she was thinking during this time somehow never quite paralleled the outward professions and protestations of her parents. By then she had already taken up with various boys and girls of differing denominations, or none, and of more or less erratic or rebellious notions, with whom she was exchanging observations anent all that she saw and a part of what she thought, although constantly being warned by her mother, if not her father, as to the dangers of such companionships and observations. At fourteen, due to an enthusiastic revival held in her church and the shouted exhortations of an amazingly good-looking evangelist, she experienced a psychic conviction of sin or spiritual unworthiness. Due to the soothing hands of the said evangelist upon her head and shoulders, she was converted and "saved," and actually for some time afterwards—and to the joy of her parents—read the Bible with enthusiasm, made public declaration of her conversion, in church and elsewhere, and made a nuisance of herself generally by seeking to awaken reasonably well-meaning friends and neighbors to the enormity of their spiritual degradation and their desperate need of the somewhat erratic salvation which had come to her. (This will become incongruous enough when contrasted with portions of the remainder of her life.)

But the religious fever was soon replaced by an emotional, if not an intellectual, curiosity as to life which was little short of feverish. She wanted to know. She wanted to go with people who weren't at all like her parents or those of whom they approved so heartily; also to think and talk of things of which they earnestly disapproved. And to read books of which, as she knew, they could not approve—some questionable novels about sex and fly-by-night lives of Brigham Young and the prophet, Joseph Smith. (The two latter tomes her mother eventually found, and with certain severe comments and suggestions as to punitive measures returned to the parents of the girl from whom they came.) Indeed, there was scarcely an hour from her birth to her eighteenth year, and later, that her mother did not feel it necessary to know, or at least to seek to know, where she was and what she was doing. But in no obviously nagging spirit. She was too truly fond of her. But Olive, being resourceful as well as sly, found methods to defeat her mother's surveillance most of the time.

But I am getting ahead of my story. The way in which I came to meet Olive was through a bookish lawyer—a lean and disagreeable Cassius of the old Greenwich Village world, by the way—who was giving a dinner to Olive and some friends of hers at "The Black Cat," in the days when that institution was still in full bloom. She was then the wife of a western lumberman of great wealth, who had permitted her to come east for a visit. At the time she was the guest

of a feather-brained editor and his wife, friends of the lawyer, all of whom prided themselves on being in touch with all that was uppermost Villagely, intellectually and otherwise. Olive, as I discovered at this dinner, was considered a find. She was rich, she was intellectual, but better still, youthful, vivacious, and beautiful, with heavy and glossy black hair, parted Spanish-fashion over a low, ivory-tinted forehead, and warm, direct, and glowing almond-shaped eyes. Her ivory-tinted neck and arms were beautifully rounded, and in a Spanish-appearing dress, shawl, earrings, a high comb, I recall thinking, amusedly, that really, for a lady from Spokane this was exceptionally Castilian.

There was a poet present whose name was rather widely flung at the time—tall and curly-haired—and him, as I noted, she devoured with her eyes. And flattered, he repaid her with toasts and compliments of the broadest and most saccharine nature. Also, there was an anarchist editor and writer of that day, who, taken by the beauty of the newcomer, bellowed against wealth and privilege while smothering her with drunken compliments. I saw him afterwards at a dozen of her parties and he could not say enough in praise of her. Then there were . . . but wait . . . Suffice it to say here that the table was tightly surrounded by at least a score of middle-aged as well as young men and women of various walks and professions, all of whom seemed to find in Olive a type as well as a central character. And she, as I could see, was the most

interesting as well as the most attractive woman present. The "red ink" of those spacious, pre-war days! The cocktails and Scotch for the ordering! And Cassius, as I noticed, was not an illiberal host. Toward midnight all were called up to his rooms in the old Grosvenor, where were more liquor, cigarettes, music, conversation. The air fairly sizzled with badinage as to the why and the whenceness of this, that, and the other.

But the thing that really arrested my attention and caused me to think of this young matron with even more curiosity than would ordinarily have been the case, was the positively feverish and self-demeaning jealousy of the woman with whom I had chosen to attend the party. This jealousy, let me say in passing, in no way concerned me. She was interested in another who was out of the city at the time and who claimed her undivided favors. But the tirade to which I listened on the way home! The illuminating comments on the lady's life! Who was she, anyhow? A gauche, western nobody, that's who she was! The wife of a far-western lumberman, who had money, of course, but who was as ignorant as a pig! Worse, why was she living here in New York without him and he out in the west toiling? Well, she could tell why! Because Olive Brand was a hard, adventuring grafter, living, if she must say it, on the money of a man she despised and of whom she was ashamed! She was a social loafer and wastrel, really, a literary and artistic pretender, and

nothing more and nothing less! Pretending to be interested in and to know art! God! Posing as having refinement! She would tell the world! Money, money, money! A big apartment on Riverside Drive! A car! All the clothes and furs and jewels she could hang on herself, and with lovers galore, and yet daring to come to Greenwich Village and discuss the rights of the poor and the theories of Marx and Kropotkin; aye, even pretending to an interest in socialism and radicalism! Tchiff! Let all self-respecting radicals beware of such fakirs and whited sepulchres! (Am I getting my metaphors and similes slightly mixed? Well, so did she.)

This is certainly interesting, I thought. There must be a little something, anyhow, to a woman who can stir up such a row, such a mood, in the breast of another woman as able as this one. And besides, she *is* very good-looking. I wonder where she lives. She had paid no particular attention to me.

Time went on and I heard nothing more regarding this reputed adventuress. Then a very different sort of person, an editor and writer of genuine ability who liked to drift around New York nosing into all sorts of things, called her to mind. He had met her somewhere. She had a most interesting place on the Drive. She did a good deal of entertaining, and it was an interesting crowd that went there. There were, to be sure, some radicals of the I. W. W. brand—a big western labor man and mine worker among others—who

seemed to like her pretty well. But what of that? She was liberal in her interests. Besides there were a lot of fellows and women from around town who were not radical in any sense. She drew all sorts—editors, artists, adventurers, loafers. I would enjoy some of her evenings and dinners. Why not come up sometime? I took the suggestion a little indifferently, for I was very pressed then for time. Just the same, these contrasting descriptions of her interested me and served to keep her in mind. She must be fascinating. A dub, or a nobody, could not draw and hold all sorts. Among other things, he had said that she was remarkably well informed, tolerant, and with a collection of books which he thought exceptional. I began to think that I would go.

Then one day my telephone bell rang, and a cooing female voice greeted me. Had she interrupted me? Would I forgive her, please? This was Olive Brand speaking. Did I remember? (I did.) She had had it in mind to invite me to come and see her but circumstances had not permitted. But she had asked others since to bring me, but they had failed. Hence this intrusion. Would I come this evening to dinner with her? No? Why would I make myself so very difficult? However, she understood. But to-morrow there was a small and really interesting group going with her to a Bohemian Hall on the East Side. A remarkable folk play was being given there in Bohemian and by Bohemian actors. Would I see that with her? She described

enough of it to interest me. I agreed to go. But there was something more. It was the way she described the play and the actors. They were not just actors in the ordinary sense. Several whom she knew were involved in the ordinary life of the Bohemian colony. The play itself was tragic. It concerned love, poverty, oppression. As I could feel in listening to her, this was not mere gabble. What she said had a humane as well as a critical ring.

At the appointed hour there she was at my door, in a car, and befurred and bejeweled as before—exotic materialism, I thought, for one so interested in Bohemian peasants and tragedy. And yet, as we talked, quickly seeking to evaluate each other mentally, I gathered that I was dealing with a vivid, sensitive, broad-minded and widely-read person, who, none the less, had not seen enough, or certainly not too much, of life to be blasé. New York was so interesting to her. Oh, if I only knew! After Spokane! After Salt Lake City! After the dearth of mental and emotional impulses in the great lock-step of the middle and far west! Why, the very streets here, the crowds, the strange neighborhoods, the strange peoples gathered by thousands to themselves and speaking an alien tongue, following their native ways, perhaps, in an alien land! Oh! In spite of my affection for the great city, she succeeded in a few moments in transferring her own enthusiasm to me—so much so that her strong physical charm, ever operating

in my case as in that of most others who met her, was subdued by her genuine mental responses.

And then we were at the entrance of the large, commonplace, labor-like hall on the upper East Side. And labor-like-looking foreigners pouring through the doors. I felt ourselves, and especially her, in her smart furs, to contrast sharply, perhaps, with this workaday world. And yet, she seemed not to be particularly affected by this thought. Beauty, as I gathered later, and even finery when properly employed, could not, in her opinion, be *de trop* or deeply objectionable anywhere. Anyone—in America, at least, as she insisted—could aspire to it. Why not present oneself at one's best everywhere so long as one indulged in no private and invidious self-laudations because of one's possessions? She could lay aside finery when necessary,—and, betimes, had—but the world was drab enough, and she preferred, without malice toward any, to make herself as presentable as possible, always. (This seemed a fair reply to the lady who wished to strip her of her ornature and gallooneries and consign her to sackcloth and ashes!)

To the one side of the main entrance was a public restaurant and drinking-hall, which appeared to be identified with this institution—a combination pool room, reading room, coffee house, beer hall, and I know not what else. Below was even a bowling alley (These foreigners, you know!), from which emanated

the sound of crashing ten-pins. She took me by the hand and opened the curtained door.

"Before we go upstairs, let's have a cup of coffee and some Bohemian cakes. They serve them in here. I saw this place one day and just walked in. They're very civil."

She led the way to a row of small, green, marble-topped tables that snuggled against a blue or green wall. It was foreign, well enough. Individuals who looked like workingmen, or small clerks, or shopkeepers, sat about reading. As we ate she cooed and purred concerning the color of New York. I could not help thinking of the life she must have led in the west. Then we went to the theater upstairs. As she had predicted, the play was interesting—decidedly—and suggested, in texture, at least, "The Power of Darkness," by Tolstoi. I gathered then what I had really not known before, that she was genuinely impressed and troubled by what I, for one, deemed the incurable ills of life, but which she, for another, did not look upon as so hopelessly irremediable. Life was going a little forward—or should—however slowly. Her reading of history, as she explained, seemed to convey as much to her. At the same time, while not for too drastic, or, perhaps, I would better say, nihilistic action herself, still, in connection with the grave battles then being waged between capital and labor in America, she was all for the betterment of the condition of labor. The wretched sweat-shop workers on the East Side! The

hat and silk workers in Danbury and Paterson! How wretched was their state! Already, as I now learned, she had been to both cities in connection with labor battles of one kind and another. There were Bill Haywood, Emma Goldman, Ben Reitman, Moyer, Pettibone—the great and embattled leaders in a dozen labor contests—all of whom, since she had been here or before coming here, she had met.

What did I think of the fierce struggle between capital and labor, anyhow? My books showed that I sympathized with the poor and oppressed. Certainly, I replied, the poor and oppressed anywhere and everywhere. But not to the extent of imagining, for instance, that because an individual was poor and oppressed, it followed that there was no least reason on his part for being so. There were, of course, not only unjust and oppressive laws but unjust and oppressive people and systems to which or whom something should be done. But as for making all men competent or equal—well, nature was not like that. The trouble with Haywood and Emma Goldman and some others who were engaged in fighting the battles of labor, as I now announced, was that they assumed that because an individual was poor and oppressed it followed instanter, that by some magic of social chemistry which I have never been able to decipher, he was to be changed —and over night, even—into a thinking and self-regulating social factor, into whose hands—and with the hands and feet of every creative genius of every other

walk of life tightly tied—was to be given the power and duty of arranging and regulating the social duties and opportunities of life. For my part, I could not see it. Oppression stopped? Certainly—if it could be—and poverty as thoroughly eliminated as the will and the ability of the individual anywhere would permit. But to say that all men, by any social arrangement yet devised, could be safeguarded against their own lacks or asininities—or that the workingman—the fellow who works with his hands alone—was, because of his numerical superiority alone, the chief consideration of life or government, never in a million years! I did not see it. I did not wish him oppressed. But neither did I wish to see him overpaid, or because he could organize and vote, be allowed to tell every other worker, or thinker, or creative genius the world over, how and in what measure he was to be rewarded for his labors. For, mentally, the man who, by reason of mental lacks, was compelled to work with his hands, was in no position to say to the creative thinker how or within what social or other limits he was to think, or how and in what fashion his creative thinking was to be rewarded. Life was not made for one class alone—laborer, artisan, artist, merchant, financier, or what you will—but for all. And by no means should classes be set side by side, in exact equality. They could not or did not think the same thoughts or require the same rewards, and never would. Life was not made for sameness, but for variety. Inherently, chemically, it was an

unstable equation. And as represented by men, so was society. Hence . . . I grew quite dogmatic if not wholly clear and therefore . . .

Followed one of those long, and maybe futile, arguments which carried us to her apartment, through a midnight supper, and finally got me to my own rooms at three A.M. By now I was convinced that I had come upon a genuine personality in the shape of a woman, physically intriguing and mentally stimulating. More, I judged her to possess a warm and comforting humanity which would not let her rest entirely at ease in the face of human misery anywhere. She was compelled largely by her sympathies, I judged, to read, ponder, talk, investigate—go here, there, anywhere, in order to see, hear, and so learn at first hand for herself. I began to think that in spite of all I had heard thus far as to her emotional and varietistic tendencies —or because of these, maybe—we should hear more of her intellectually, later on.

By now, being interested, I accepted an invitation to dinner soon afterward, and on this occasion found her surrounded by a varied and interesting group. For along with, for instance, Moyer—he of the Haywood-Moyer-Pettibone trial for the murder of one Steunenberg, sometime lieutenant governor of Colorado, in the great Colorado mine workers' strike of some years before—there were two painters and a musician, all well known to me; the editor of a liberal political weekly; the editor of a socialistic weekly of the "Daily Worker"

variety; the poet who had blown compliments at her at the "Black Cat" dinner; the ever-amazing Ben Reitman, quondam "side kick" of Emma Goldman; a journalist (and remember him, please, if you will), who, possessed of means and some leisure, was doing New York—a column—for one of the leading Sunday supplements; and for color and ornament some half-dozen youthful married and single females, all reasonably attractive and all of that hoyden and yet vigorous intellectuality which somehow leads to a flair for any intellectual, or artistic, or social issue worthy of the name. We were, however, gathered merely to eat, drink and be merry.

A thing that interested me at this time as much as anything else in connection with Olive Brand was the tempo, or mood, in which her apartment was furnished. "Sumptuous" is a fairly accurate word to use here. Apparently the lumberman had opened his purse and told her to select as she wished. Period furniture reigned, all underlaid with handsome rugs. There were tapestries, some ultra-modern statuary, and a few interesting, if almost too vivid, Neo-Impressionist paintings gathered from I scarcely know where. Rugs, hangings, lamps, pictures, books, all suggested that studied carelessness that so often characterizes those who are eager to impress one with the refinement of their surroundings. The books—any number—ranged over a wide variety of subjects. This woman was obviously a rapid, avid and serious reader. For a little while I was in doubt

as to whether all this represented her own taste and interests or whether those of another were involved. In the course of a year I was willing to credit all to her.

To all she was friendly and attentive, painstakingly so, and from the broad and rather savage comments of her guests at times I could gather that, intellectually, she was the soul of tolerance. Almost, as I felt at the time, too much so. Her interests, if anything, were too general and too liberal. But plainly, as opposed to wild social panaceas with their accompanying revolutionary disorders, she was for development in every direction. The people should be taught, taught, taught! (If only they could be!) As I said to her afterwards, she should have chosen the rising sun as her symbol and sign manual. But also she was too interested in individuals as captains in every field to permit her to take sides, and yet as keen in some instances—that is, regarding some current labor issues, as any radical.

From the feminine or sex point of view, as I gathered on this occasion, she was very much sought after and decidedly varietistic, and this in the face of the liberal husband in the west. And for that reason, I was inclined at times, more especially at first, to think meanly of her. (To know all is to forgive all.) There was the publicist who had told me about her parties. He was a rugged, dynamic, and attractive fellow, whom I suspected of a personal interest here. And I was right. Next, there was the poet who had sung her praises at "The Black Cat." From his drunken gayety

on this and other occasions, as well as his private confession later, he had already been admitted to her favors. And the labor giant. Yes, he also. Was the woman insatiable, I pondered?

Just the same, I liked her very much. There was something positively inspirational about her attitude toward life, her enthusiasm for it, her sense of beauty, poetry, romance, her intense interest in those who could do anything mentally—especially where the same was informed by a feeling for beauty—as well as her real pity for those who could not. I judged her to be a woman of the new, or old, freedom—I don't know which to call it—the present feminine reply to the age-old varietism of men. At this time, at least, she did not seem to care whether or not many or any held chastity in esteem. She was for life, and effort, and romance in any form. And to her, apparently, virtue—or the monogamic code of morality—was a figment of the mind, useful to some, to others not. For herself, apparently, she had decided that she was entitled to that Dionysiac freedom which the Greeks granted to the Hetæræ. She seemed to think that women should enjoy the same sex privileges as men, but she did not argue it, and plainly she was not for limiting those for men. In so far as I could gather from actions, as well as thoughts expressed, she seemed to feel that out of freedom of contact between men and women of ability must spring not only joyous inspiration and an intellectual rebirth but social happiness, no less, more and

better ideas and greater courage for the social development of man. I have often laughed listening to her and the Gargantuan Ben Reitman agreeing on what was best for the world. (Oh, Rabelais, where were you at the time?) Not only that, but she did not seem to look upon sensuality as selfish indulgence. On the other hand, it was all identified with romantic play and happiness and thought. Anything, as she once said to me, to bring about greater freedom for the mind—a social whirl in which men and women would be happy and in which, at the same time, they would think and reach worthwhile conclusions.

As to the propriety or worthwhileness of this method, I have this to say. If men and women can enjoy themselves for long in such a whirl, I gather that there must be some natural justification for it. Obviously, Puritanism tends toward the humdrum and the commonplace—the mere breeding of families. And for what? On the other hand, not all men can endure the varietistic woman, any more than all women can endure the varietistic man. And not all can endure humdrum, not even the orderly. Where some are so plainly urged by their own chemisms to spin madly, why not?

Think what one will, however, Olive Brand was a personage. She introduced me, and no doubt others, to interesting people and thoughts, events and books. On one occasion, as I recall now, she took me to a secret reception to one of the then fighting labor lead-

ers in the great Lawrence strike. It was in a shabby hall on the East Side, most carefully veiled from the police, for there was a warrant out for his arrest. This throng crowding into that stuffy, smelly hall was a revelation to me of the passionate way in which the life-hungry and the disenfranchised cling, at times, to those who offer them a gleam of hope. To be sure, this man was no real savior. He has since been defeated, exiled along with others and not so long ago died abroad. He was only a passionate, perhaps mentally disorganized, brooder upon the ills of life, who without a trace of profit to himself chose to fight and go down in the fierce struggle of labor for what it considers its due. But that room! And those white, washed-out, seeking, eager faces! And the little working Carmens and slaveys who gazed upon him with adoring eyes! It was like looking through a window upon a world you had never really seen before. It was like seeing Christ walking thoughtfully among the forlorn of Hades.

But that was but one thing. She it was who took me to see the New York mosque of the Mohammedans; to the only New York meeting-place of the Mazdanians; to a prohibited prize fight. And among other things, in the heat of a trying and, for me, rather poverty-stricken summer, she it was who eventually found an old, mud-foundered scow on the North River, near 96th Street, where long before, by some almost impractical waterman, had been established a most com-

monplace steak and chop restaurant, but where one could sit of a spring or summer evening and for the princely sum of seventy-five cents eat while viewing sunsets and sparkling stars. The passing of the boats! The lap of the water below our modest table! The gay, silly talk of a dozen people persuaded by her to come from all sorts of places! I can see them now, hurrying dockward about seven o'clock, their minds intent upon the pleasure of enjoying a steak with potatoes upon a water-logged scow. The fol-de-rol deliciousness of it all; the vagrom sense of adventure which had prompted her and now drew us to share her discovery with her!

But to return. Throughout these contacts I had sought to make it clear that mine was purely a mental interest. Nevertheless, and in spite of this reserve, I eventually found that I, like so many others, was being set apart for an adventure. No one thing at first carried any such import, of course. She was always "hail fellow" to all. But she had the most ingratiating of smiles and a way of throwing up her arms when she saw one coming that said more plainly than words, "Welcome!" And she had, always, some little special news to trade with one. After a time, as I noticed, and just the same, she began inviting me alone. Now it was to listen to some music, which she could interpret either vocally or instrumentally very well indeed. Or, she had a new and rare book with which I was by no means familiar. It was so that I came to know of Frazer and "The

Golden Bough." Also, the "Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex," by Freud. (At her place later I met the American emissary of that great Austrian interpreter of the prime moving impulse of life.)

One day at luncheon in her apartment, the implication became almost too obvious. There was wine and the smoke of incense. She had a playful way of arranging a chair for you, then throwing down a pillow for herself at your feet and bringing a low table from which could be served coffee, or candy, or fruit, or upon which a book might be placed, or some pictures displayed. And she knew exactly into what graceful poses to sink. But before all this we had been in the kitchen together concocting some of the wonders of the feast, myself as cook's helper and scullion. And it was during this time, and to aid in the matter of progress, I make no doubt, that she began telling me the story of her life. I have told part of it. I have described the bearded whiskerando who was her father. She claimed she never understood him in any way, and that at eighteen she was positively tormented by a desire to go against all the commonplaces and solemnities that he represented. One day then, browsing among the bookshelves of the Salt Lake City library, as she here and now told me, she encountered a young lawyer of whom she knew nothing, a career-seeker from somewhere else. He was engaging and good-looking. He helped her with her search and made some suggestions as to books with which he was acquainted.

He told her where his office was and contrived a re-encounter in this place, a most convenient realm. Later, he invited her to his place.

And so this affair absorbed her for over a year. As she told me now, she liked him only fairly well. But the laughing excuse she gave for being interested so long was that it was so difficult for her to see him at all that the very difficulties fired her interest. And so the thing took on the tang of a real adventure. You may depend upon it that he was already married. But the thing that brought this incident to a close was neither danger nor disaster, but weariness—the feeling that in spite of this, her life was circumscribed and that the adventure was not very significant. After a few months, she said, she began to guess that her lover was not so remarkable after all, and that she had rather disadvantaged herself. He was still satisfied with his wife, who had means, and when the time came relinquished Olive philosophically enough.

Next, about this time there appeared on the scene the husband-to-be, the Spokane and Alaska lumberman, who had been previously described to me (but never by her) as a gross materialist and bounder. According to her, although good-looking and wealthy, his was the type of mind that is limited absolutely by what may be seen by the eye, felt by the hands, counted by numbers, or measured with a yardstick. For him there was no hinterland, unless it should prove one of insane, religious, or political illusion. But most of all, he wor-

shiped money and all that it stood for—ample lands, large houses, expensive furnishings, bank accounts, directorships, the companionship or social acknowledgment, at least, of his position and security by others, who, like himself, had achieved money.

In this connection she had something to say concerning her father. As you will recall, she early stated that she had never understood him. Well, now, in this business of settling her in marriage she understood him even less. As she had always gathered from his conversation—or so she said—there was one thing that was important in life, and that was one's religion, and by religion in his case, be it understood, he meant not Christianity at large but the Baptist sect, of which he was a participating unit. The sect it was that was important—his church, its membership, the social and commercial favors which brisk and attentive union with it here assured him. None the less, prospective husband appearing on the scene, and having no valiant faith,—but rather a thin and tentative connection with the Methodists,—he was immediately escorted to the family home to meet daughter, because, as father and mother well understood and as much as said, it was time that she was getting married. And religion or no religion, here was a rich man! He had come to Salt Lake to look into and if possible buy certain grazing lands. And father was beside himself with care as to how daughter should look, telephoning to the house beforehand that he was bringing an important young

man, a prospective client of the bank, and would daughter be so kind as to show him a little attention, for her father's sake—not a word as to the Baptist faith or even the gentleman's personal record. He was rich. The bank had already established that for itself.

At any rate, upon sight, according to her, the stranger was all attention. He lingered in Salt Lake for days. More, he filled her as well as her parents' ears with sharply defined estimates of his financial worth. And once he was out of the house on any given day, her parents frequently referred to this. Worse, in so far as Olive was concerned, a girl schoolmate had not only recently married remarkably well but had proceeded to look down on her. This, taken with her parents' encomiums, inflamed her. At least she would have great wealth. Then, too, all she had been taught to believe in regard to securing for herself a comfortable marriage berth before it should be too late operated to strengthen the thought that after the lawyer it might be the better part of caution to protect herself with a marriage certificate. Accordingly, since he wrote, they corresponded. He came again. She decided, so she said, that once she was married she could do about as she chose, anyhow. So why not? Besides, she could lord it over her girl schoolmate. And so when he came again, she agreed. Followed a real church wedding, with Olive carrying lilies. Then a visit to Hawaii, where were some commercial matters to look into, even on the honeymoon, and then to Spokane.

By to-day, no doubt, no one needs to have described to him the intellectual and spiritual aridity of the up-and-doing American city of the nineteenth-in-population, seventeenth-in-financial-and-other-resources type. Still, as Olive told it, it made interesting listening. The D.A.R. and its immense prominence; the Tagore Reading Circle; the New Thought Circle; the American Federation of Women's Clubs; at least seven societies for the prevention or amelioration of this or that; plus, in some of the best families, aggressive sectarian religious views. Opposite this—the intellectual life, as it were—lay the commercial and recreative interests of the best men and their wives and daughters—the stock market, the country club, the mercantile club, the Blankum-Blankums and their seventy horse-power car, and Constantia Blankum-Blankum and her superior circle of friends. The very best intellectual drawing-room tables of that day, as she said, still displayed the latest works of F. Hopkinson Smith, Marie Corelli, and Thomas Nelson Page. There were some belated tableaux vivant. Billy Sunday was a great social figure and invited to the best homes.

Now despite all this and the fact that at this time this young matron was little more than sly, sensual, tricky, and ambitious, there was something else in her that was destined to change her, and change her very fast. It was not, as she was now beginning to see, money alone that she wanted. Perhaps she had just reached the place where she was beginning to find

herself. At any rate, the atmosphere tended to throw her back upon herself and to emphasize her interest in things which were not like this. She began, as she said, to buy and read important books—histories, novels, biographies. True, her husband had surprised her with a library, which he had taken over from some one who had been compelled to give it up! But the books tended only to induce heart failure! Choice sets of Scott, Dickens, Bret Harte, and E. P. Roe! Naturally, she began to look about for some measure of active mental life among people who did not think as these people did. But as yet she held only membership cards of the Eat & Drink Country Club, the Sunny Slope Golf Club, the Pebble Beach Boat Club—and, coincidentally, husband was making it clear that he wanted his wife to become a power socially here just as he was becoming a power financially. He urged her constantly to invite and entertain as many of those who could be of any service to him as the house would hold. Her ambition did not lie that way. She shirked and dawdled over the task, she said. They began to quarrel. Worse, she made common cause with a young matron of her own years who was feeling herself to be almost as unsatisfactorily situated. She was the wife of a real estate plunger who had some money, and she craved a good time, but not of the conventional stripe. Rather, she tended to radical action and was intensely interested in radicals.

Some fifteen or twenty miles from the city in which

Olive was now residing was a western radical resort, or camp, in which were hibernating at this time a number of writers and agitators interested in the deadly labor union wars of the west—some Swedish and Norwegian, others American or English agitators of repute. The colony had a bad name locally because it had been rumored that some of those who lived there as man and wife were not married. As yet there was no proof, and so no public storm, but the fact that they were radicals and identified with the cause of labor was sufficient to cast suspicion on the entire company. Yet for reasons of her own, this new friend of Olive's held a kindly feeling toward this group. From a friend who was the wife of one of the leaders of this colony she had learned much that interested her of the thoughts and aims of these people. Did not Olive want to meet some of them? There were interesting mental as well as social contacts to be found there. Did not Olive want to go? And so it was that at last these two ventured among them.

And as she now explained, the atmosphere of the place—was fascinating. There was little money, but much speculation and personal intellectual intensity. Also among them dwelt a young poet and radical with whom Olive proceeded to carry on a desperate flirtation. His name was Githeroe, later killed in a labor fight, as she told me, and he it was who introduced her to the literature and leaders of the radical world—to Strindberg, Ibsen, Gorky, Kropotkin, Henry George,

and Marx. Further, because of love, he visited her at her home, and it was not long before hints were being given to H. B. Brand, her husband, that all was not well in his domestic world. His wife and Mrs. Realtor had been seen in the camp in question. A particular radical from the camp was visiting his own home from time to time when he was not there.

Followed a great conjugal storm. Brand wanted to know, and was supplied with half-truths. She had been unsophisticatedly inquiring, that was all. These radicals were not a bad sort—very intelligent. What was wrong with them? Being a prominent and successful figure in the nineteenth-city-in-population, and a member of the chamber of commerce, he had a very great deal to say as to what was wrong with them. They were a lot of damned firebrands, anarchists, socialists! They ought to be arrested and locked up, drummed out of the country! He wouldn't have such cattle coming to his home, and she must not be seen any more within miles of the camp. If she couldn't, or wouldn't associate with the best people of her world, at least she shouldn't and couldn't associate with these others either. She would ruin herself and him—which was, no doubt, true.

Unfortunately, Olive had been broadened mentally by these contacts. She no longer cared for her husband and his friends, and she did like these people—at least she liked what they stood for—and she was beginning to look upon her husband as narrow, greedy, self-

opinionated and ignorant. He had money, but apparently, in some instances at least and as she saw it, it took greed and a certain amount of dullness or insulation against intellect and romance to say nothing of radical thought to make money. She began to wonder how to extricate herself from the peculiar situation in which she now found herself. But the memory of those conservative convictions which from infancy on had tended to overawe her were influencing and overawing her now.

Just the same, she could not, or would not, bring herself to subscribe. She would not give up Mrs. Realtor, nor the radicals either. Clandestine meetings began. A note was intercepted. She was ordered out of the house, and then, as she was preparing to go, ordered to remain—a confession of weakness of which, as she admitted, she was quick to make use. Only she began a tentative defense of radicalism which infuriated her husband even more than the intercepted note, because, as he now feared, she was infected with that virus. But knowing now that he cared too much for her to let her go, at least easily, she stood her ground, and once more attempted to leave. Whereupon, in a rage, he tore her clothes off her and locked her in a room. Then he wept, begged forgiveness, and bought her many more things than he had destroyed.

But this was a mere beginning. He dogged her with questions as to her conduct, views, obligations to him, "society," her position. He threatened to kill her. Once

he beat her and when she tried to escape assured her that if she went he would follow her and beat her again or kill her. More, he declared he would write her parents, or visit them, and expose all. That and that only, as she said, gave her pause, for as restless as she was she still hesitated to infringe upon the local standing and spiritual and social peace of her parents, who knew nothing of her changed views and were so commonplace in theirs. It would hurt them so, particularly her father whom she dreaded to disturb. In the meantime, her husband, taking advantage of this pause, made such a violent, if indirect, attack on the radical community through the newspapers that it became impossible for that colony to exist longer. Its members were scattered. However (which same he did not appear to grasp), he was dealing with a growing and changing organism, and one morning this organism announced at breakfast that it was through. It did not like Spokane. It did not like him. It did not intend to live with him any longer, beatings or no beatings. House, car, money, position—all were in the discard. It was going out in the world to do for itself. It was going to New York, to Columbia University among other things, to see if it could not fit itself to write short stories and plays. It just couldn't loaf and socialize. Let him find some it who could! It was through!

At first enraged, Brand was later dismayed, and even terrified. He stayed home to argue with her. She

would not change. He followed her into her bedroom, and standing behind her in silence, finally exclaimed: "What's the matter with me, Olive, anyhow? Ain't I good enough? Is that it?" There was something in his tone, according to her, that was both defeated and sad. For the first time in all their period of contact, as she now said, that self-efficiency and bravado with which he overawed others, and her even, appeared to have oozed out of him. She wanted to sympathize and to explain, but she realized it was hopeless. He could not understand her or himself. At bottom she could scarcely understand him. And only away from him, as she said she knew at the time, would she be able to prevent herself from hating him. All that she could say was that it was impossible for her to stay.

Then he made suggestions. Why leave for good? If she wanted to go to New York, all right, he would let her—pay her expenses and tuition at Columbia—provided that when the time was up (two years, she had said)—she would agree to return and try him and this world once more. Maybe they could get along after all. He himself might change. And just once in a while, would she let him look her up in New York, just to say hello? He would swear to make just a friendly call, not a thing more. Oh, yes, and one condition more—so long as he was paying the expenses, wouldn't she agree not to have anything to do with any of these radicals, especially the poet, and refrain from being unfaithful until she decided to quit for good?

(I am injecting here certain data which came out afterwards through her and certain individuals whose testimony against his wife he was endeavoring to secure. At first she told a somewhat different tale. He had not exacted all of these things, by any means.)

Thus, as I now gathered, it was something like this that was behind the New York apartment, the car, the furniture and objects of art. Naturally, he wished her to live as became the wife of one H. B. Brand. Among other things, as I gathered later, he handed her a paid-up lease for three years. But despite the fact that I did not get the exact nature of their compact at first, I was not sufficiently interested to be moved by it. I was not in love with Olive Brand, and the insoluble ills that spring from conflicting temperaments left me cold. I could see value only in separation at almost any cost. The one thing I could not relish was the thought of her using his means to disport herself in varietism and romance. Yet, who was I to write the exact law of social relationship? She interested me as a temperament, and does to this day, ten years after she is dead. I had the feeling at the time, and still have, that maybe she did not quite know herself, or that, at most, certain chemic fires burned so high that they obscured all sharp demarcation of mine and thine. They have a way of doing that. Besides, as I guessed, the amount he was allowing her could not seem so much to either herself or him. Was he not truly rich? I do recall asking her whether, once the three years were up,

she would go back to him, and her saying that she wouldn't, and adding that by that time, though, he might not want her so much any more, either—a thought that struck me as both keen and cool. Even so, I liked her. There was so much that was playful, graceful, and, above all, incalculable, in all that she did and said.

But just the same, the luncheon, with its romantic overtures, came to nothing, and at about five in the afternoon I departed, not to see her again for months. Then, on a winter afternoon, my telephone bell rang, and there she was. It was a long time since we had seen each other, wasn't it? Well, she hadn't forgotten if I had, and wouldn't I come to meet two very interesting women who were coming to her place to tea? I doubted the wisdom of it at the time, and excused myself. But another day over the telephone she suggested that I join a group that was going somewhere. I did not, for some reason, possibly another engagement. It was not long after this that she came to see me. She was very simply garbed on this occasion, as I noted, and in a curious frame of mind. Why did I avoid her? There was gossip going on about her, she knew. Was that the reason? Not at all, I assured her. I had not even heard the gossip, and was not interested, but in her I was interested always. I was very glad she had come; it was good to see her again.

She launched at once into a study of herself, just as though I were a father confessor. Her life, as she now

said, had been a series of blunders, but with a right intent. Believe it or not, as I chose, blindly she had been seeking to grow. She had been restrained and the urge upward had been too much for her better judgment. It was true. Yes, it was. But out of it all so far she had realized two worthwhile things—contacts with doers and thinkers and this period in New York. The experiment of studying at Columbia, followed seriously enough at first, had been a mistake. One could not learn to write plays or short stories so. One had to live and understand life. She knew that now. Also, that style was a gift, the result of a temperament.

But this was not all. Perhaps her seemingly unfair attitude toward her husband had alienated me. But I must not be too hard on her. She had not stated the case as clearly as she might have. She was not poor when she married him and had really condescended more to please her parents than herself. Besides, her mind was immature at that time. And had he not had two years of her life which he valued very much? But for that he had really only given her things for which she did not care. Besides, he was very rich. Why shouldn't he give her a little since very soon now she would not be taking anything from him any more? She had a plan. She was going to do something for herself. It would be hard, since when she left her husband she would not be able to look to her parents for any aid. They would certainly sympathize with him. But just the same she intended to try to make

her own way, by working. Wasn't that all right? Why couldn't we be friends once more on that score?

I did not attempt to explain my real thoughts in regard to her, although they were very flattering. I merely said I believed she had elected the right course and knew she would succeed. Also that we had never been anything but friends.

A week or two later she telephoned that she was trying to sublet her apartment for the remainder of her lease, which had something over a year to run. Also to sell her furniture and her car. With the proceeds she proposed to take a smaller place, a much smaller place. Now she wanted to be alone, she said, in order to test whether she could write. Meanwhile, and if possible, she prepared to get a divorce, or let her husband get one. It was not long before she found a place, and moved, and then I was invited to come and see her. It was far north, near One Hundred and Ninetieth Street, in a newer and less attractive section, much poorer. The building was a five-story affair, with a very small elevator which ran only when you could get the negro who was the man-of-all-work to come and operate it. The cost, I guessed, could not be more than thirty-five or forty dollars a month. Her place was two flights up and consisted of a small living room, bedroom, kitchenette and bath. But books crowded the walls of the living room and bedroom. Her interesting books! Nearly all of the remaining space was taken by her piano, a victrola, and a type-

writer. A snug fit. From the window of her kitchen one obtained a rather charming view of the upper city, but from nowhere else.

I cannot say that she looked or seemed any more practical or sane here than she had in the other place. Rather the dreamer and poet that she really was, slowly evolving, to be sure, but infected with the virus of the ideal which would never let her rest. She was anxious, as she now said, to say or do something that would reflect her own point of view and by that means make her own way in life. I liked her much better. By degrees I noticed also that her wardobe grew simpler —a thought that did not sadden me, seeing that she had never needed all she had in the first instance. Next—and this was a fact that interested me and must have impressed her, too—was that although here she had none of the facilities for offering that hospitality which had characterized her on Riverside Drive, still she was followed by as interesting a group of people as ever I saw in leash to any temperament in New York—editors, writers, artists, propagandists, socialists, anarchists, conservatives, as you will. Her petty rooms were crowded at least two or three times a week with those who came this distance to find her, and without hope of either dinner or drinks.

But it was now when she was seeking to sever herself from the old life that her real troubles began. For her husband, who had come to New York not long before she moved this time, had conveyed to her

the fact that all along he had been aware of the type of life she had been and, as he believed, still was, leading, and that unless she now returned to him he would furnish her with no more money and would expose her, not only to her parents in the west but to the public. He had changed his mind, he said. Her conduct in his absence and on his money had completely alienated him. She was this, she was that. Still, as any one could see, he still cared for her in some twisted, erratic way. For, as he now stated (and I will explain my authority later), as bad as she was, and as determined as he was to punish her, still, assuming that she would return to him and "behave" herself, he would not act in the drastic fashion he threatened.

The way I came to know all this was this: One day there was a ring at my door—a ring, by the way, which had been preceded by a visit from Olive herself, in which she had explained how troublesome and determined and non-understanding the man really was and how he was setting out to force her to do that which she could never do. But now here was the man himself—of medium height, smooth-shaven, rather soundly built, dynamic, and authoritative. My name was so and so, was it not? (It was.) I was a friend of Olive Brand's, was I not—one of her admirers and well-wishers? (I was all of that, I hoped.) Well, then he had something he would like to say to me. Could I spare him a few minutes? It might prove of value to Olive and himself. Being invited in he was

soon launched upon an intimate and interesting picture of their married past. Oh, what a girl was Olive before ever she had been tainted with the virus of these radicals! How excellent was her family! She had been carefully guarded, and he had thought that she would be contented with the financial and social opportunities he was able to offer her in Spokane. But, alas, these radicals! They had turned her head. She was following an insane, anarchistic course which could only lead to her destruction. Why, look at her life here in New York! And now he proceeded to set forth what plainly hired spy-men had brought to his ears. She was, or had been, in the company of this, that, and the other individual—"notorious," as he labeled them—Greenwich Village ne'er-do-wells, pseudo and disgraced artists and poets, loafers, I. W. W. social wreckers—and the like—an unholy and disgraceful crew. Even now as he knew and could prove, she frequented the Liberal Club. She knew and associated with Emma Goldman, Ben Reitman, Bill Haywood, Thomas Moyer, and other notorious radicals and labor leaders. She had even taken part in labor strikes, helping make soups for strikers, serving in kitchen camps. And as he set forth all this, his practical and conservative mouth hardened, his jaw squared, and his eyes flashed. Actually the material convictions of the man fairly fascinated me. Those carefully cut clothes, new and highly polished shoes, the small bright bow tie

that emphasized his striped shirt and low, turned down collar.

Lord, what a far cry from this man to this woman, I thought! And what a commentary on the fumbling, groping, unilluminated state of youth—and of maturity, for that matter, in many instances—that this girl and this man should ever have imagined that they could live together; that he should now really imagine that if she would return he could live with her! And what a hell, assuming that this could be forced on her, it would prove for her and him! I studied him curiously, for I saw that he believed for some reason that I was likely to have some influence on her. And in his favor. I proceeded to explain that I feared there was a deep-seated temperamental as well as mental difference here which could not be overcome by quarreling or force. Both were plainly looking at life from different angles. What appeared so dreadful to him did not appear dreadful to her—nor to myself, for that matter. For these several reasons, as I now blandly cooed, it would be best if he were to drop this pursuit. Cut her off from all financial aid if he chose (I understood that he had already done so), but let her go her own way, work out her own destiny.

Whereupon he suddenly whirled upon me. That was not the way he would have it at all. She was a vile woman, a vampire, a wastrel. Unless she agreed to come back and live with him at once, he would proceed to show her up. He had been having her watched all

this time. He knew who her friends were and what her relations with them had been. Wait until her parents and her friends and relatives in Salt Lake heard of this! He would hire lawyers and newspapermen. He would get articles published and blow up Greenwich Village and these radicals! He would fix her. Whereupon I suggested that we part. It would do no good for him to harangue me. I had no real mental influence on her and if I had I would not use it to effect a reunion which I could only look upon as a mistake. He stalked slowly out of the place and that was the last I ever saw of him.

But the reunion did not come about. True, he did annoy and even frighten her, causing her, as she plainly evinced from time to time, intense mental anguish. Her mail was intercepted and opened. Her telephone wire tapped and all messages coming to her relayed to him. It was reported at the time among those who knew her that telephone messages concerning her, and to the following effect, were distributed: "Is that Mr. ——?" "Yes." "You know Olive Brand?" "Certainly!" "This is a friend of yours speaking. You had better have nothing more to do with her. She is afflicted with . . ." (the standard complaint). Imagine this type of social warfare, and by one who pretended to love her and who wanted her to live with him! Naturally, some who had known and liked her were frightened away. Others, of whom I chanced to be one, were in no wise affected. But he sought to, and

to a certain extent did, make a pariah of her, even though he was still willing to take her back himself.

One of the things he did effect was this. Since he was dogging her every move, as it were, it became necessary for her to flee, and this time by night, to a very small apartment on the East Side, which had no telephone to watch, and where she lived under another name. Incidentally, she now paid a return visit to her parents in Salt Lake, in order to forestall, if possible, the damaging attacks she felt certain he was about to make. But, as she explained afterwards, nothing had been gained by that, not even the mental ease of her parents in regard to her. For, plainly, by now, they looked upon her as a failure, her husband as the epitome of law and order and all worthwhile forms. Her father was hopelessly set in orthodox and conventional views and did not approve of divorce. Once married, it was best to stay married. Why should she not return to her wealthy husband?

But that small apartment on the upper East Side! And how she now contrasted with her old self! I recall meeting her once in First Avenue, near 66th Street. She wore a little gingham house dress and was carrying some groceries and a magazine in a basket. Except as to fine feathers, she had not changed much, looked even more interesting to me in that swarming upper East Side than she did on the Drive. Invited to see her new place we trudged up three flights of slate steps to a combination kitchen and

dining room, with a living room attached. But they looked over the East River, a gracious view, and it was clean. Also, there were her books and a typewriter and a piano. She explained that her husband's actions had caused her to fear for her friends, and so it was best to hide from all. But she was writing now, or trying to—short stories, poems, essays, a play. And if anything should ever come of her efforts in a public way, well then, she would be able to live, and happily, by herself or with some one, but mentally and spiritually free, or so she seemed to think at least.

Yet from thence on, for a time at least, her life seemed to grow darker rather than brighter. According to her, before actually filing suit, Brand returned to her parents and so filled them with tales of her present state that for the time being, at any rate, they would not even communicate with her. Next, he attached the lease and contents of her old apartment. And we all know how profitable writing—and especially intellectual writing—can be for the beginner. Worse, as I could see, she had no clear idea as yet as to what she could do or what it is that the public really cares for. During the first year of this East Side life, therefore, her piano and victrola disappeared, and she seemed to be in danger of real want. Certainly, as I saw it, she was beginning to pay a very fair price for her convictions and her ideals.

And then . . .

But before I tell the rest I should like to tell one

or two charming incidents that befell her over there. One evening when I went to see her she showed me a letter that had been shoved under her door by one of those firebrand poet lovers who sometimes take the heart of a woman by storm. He was a writer—a poet of sorts—a youth of some ability who afterwards made a name for himself as a soldier in France. He knew of her troubles, of how she had hidden away. I never read a more beautiful letter. Full of genuine emotion and admiration—the kind of a letter any woman would be delighted to receive. He spoke of her white, thoughtful face, her black hair, of how he had been reminded of mother-of-pearl and jet and scarlet. Did she stand in need? He would be glad to help her. But whether she ever looked at or thought of him again, he would treasure the memory of her face, the music of her steps. And then one day, weeks later, there was an envelope containing some money lying in the same place. He thought she might be in actual want, I presume.

And again, one of those labor men whom I have mentioned—a really distinguished leader in his way—sought her out and offered aid. And asking him about her once, he said to me that among all of the women he had known whose sympathies had been enlisted by labor troubles, Olive seemed not the most understanding, perhaps, but the most sympathetic and inspirational. "She helped at Lawrence and Paterson," he said. "There was real danger, always, and it was all

ugly and hard. She felt sorry for the workers, I suppose, especially the hungry and defeated, but mostly, I think, she saw something else—adventure, dignity, beauty, in an almost hopeless contest. It was something, not to go about with her exactly, but just to see her. She had a smile, and hope, and, she conveyed something to me—inspiration, I think it was."

And then one day, through the mail, and while she was still living on the East Side, I received the following poem. It was addressed to me, carried my name at the head, and caused me to pause, to understand, to know, that this woman could most surely distinguish herself if she would—not in the petty little passing fiction field but in some broader walk of thought and inspiration, where live, and dream, and execute, those who most truly influence the world.

I offer the poem in evidence:

Out
Amid endless levelness, a cheerless span,
I find you.
Apart . . .
Alone . . .
Missing
What is not there.

Out
In lightlessness
Where sense pales to sensuality,
Where both lapse to dreams,
Dream dies to night,

And night dispels to nothingness,
I find you.
Fixed.
Paling with the paling dream,
A nihilistic acolyte
Of night and nothingness,
Needing
What is not there.

Out
On the breast of barrenness,
I find you,
Rooted.
Not born to what is there.
Wishing . . .
What is not there.

. . . . . .

Amid a parching seethingness,
A reeking loneliness,
I find you.
Breaking . . .
Athirst . . .
Insatiate!

In the round-and-all-about
Wherein,
Though moving,
All of us are fixed,
As surely as the lily,
Cactus,
Or the mignonette,

And from which,
Like them,
We draw our seasoned sustenance
Of body and of soul,
I find you,
Lifting up your head,
Aspiring thought,
Craving love,
Desirous of creation's power.

In the round-and-all-about
That conditions all of us
Much more than what is handed down,
More,
Perhaps,
Than occult urge called will within,
I find you,
Wooing rain,
And sun,
And life,
And light,
With every eager, needful, hopeful, wistful bit of you.

In a peopled paradoxic desert
I find you.
Wasting,
Drying in the heat so dry.

People . . . People . . . People . . . People!
Everywhere!
But all

Each one
A strange mirage.
Religions, philosophies,
Games for wealth and power.
Arts,
Movements,
Revolutions . . .
Everywhere!
But not a one more than a desert's dream
Of water-springs that cannot satisfy.

To this round-and-all-about
You are as swiftly sensitive
As the mignonette or lily.
Indeed . . .
You . . . in your turn . . .
Are but a plant.

. . . . . .

A human plant.
Your body is the stem.
Your brain
Its destined, lovely flowering.
And like the lily
Or the mignonette,
You too are rooted in the round-and-all-about,
And
Again like them,
You too are as deeply sensitive.

I find you
And,

I pause beside you.
I, too, have known
The levelness and lightlessness
The loneliness and barrenness
The strange mirages and evasive dreams,
I look upon you
With wonder, reverence and awe.
I watch you
Lifting up your head,
Aspiring thought,
Wooing life and light,
Craving love,
Desirous of Creation's power,
And,
I understand.

I cannot speak,
I cannot breathe,
I cannot move.
I only weep a tear
That, unseen, trickles
Out of sight and sense.
Then, toward you,
Stretch out my hands.

I would put hands upon you.
I would bring you home with me,
And to you I would say:
You were, in days of birth,
Some dear dead plant's plant.
You were,
In fullness of your first desires,

The wide world's plant.
You were,
In after days,
The desert's plant.

. . . . . .

And thus . . .
I find you
But now
You are my plant.
I put my hands upon you.
I bring you all to me.
I place your stem between my breasts.
I hold you here above my heart.
I feel your roots within my heart
As surely as I feel
The blood that yields me life.

And now and then,
In some seductive mood,
A wandering, truant thought
Does make me wish
I might have been the mother plant
That mothered you
. . . The slender pod that once
Did hold you close and dark.
The soil
That moistly first
Did cradle you,
That nursed you on to life,
Expression,
Wide-eyed, cognate thought.

The gardener's hand
That could have tended budding eagerness . . .
Yet . . .
Oh . . . why the wish?
It has not happened so.
And yet,
At times,
It seems
As if
All this had really been
All sweetly strangely true;
As if . . .
I seem to have the memory of such things.

Yet after all
I am not sure.
But that 'tis better
Than to seek . . .
And seek . . .
And seek . . .
To now and then discover . . .
To lovingly transplant . . .
In this so yearning,
Craving,
Life-adoptive way.

I sought
Across the levelness and lightlessness:
I sought
Across the loneliness and barrenness;
I sought
Through passing people;

I sought
Through bright mirages and evasive dreams;
I sought
Quite past and through
All things that could not satisfy;
But now,
Now,
I . . . yes . . .
I would that I might be
The earth
In which to bed your roots anew;
The rain
That nourishing
Descends
In blessed joyful weeping:
The air,
The wind
To feed your blossoming,
The bee
That brings the diverse golden inspiration dust;
The stem
On which to hang the wondrous mellow fruit of you;
The sky
To hold the sun that sends inceptive rays;
Horizons far
Toward which you look . . . and look
To guess what is beyond;
The sun itself
That in its burning, passionate
To you is chief and first
Your qualitative source of life.

And . . . oh!
And would now that I could . . .
That large, caressing something be . . .
That understanding, pregnant solitude,
The round-and-all-about, . . .
That is not levelness or cheerlessness,
That is not loneliness or barrenness,
In which you move,
And joy
And have your being . . .
The space,
The peace
And light,
In which you need to be.
A plant indeed you are . . .
A human plant,
Your body is the stem,
Your brain,
Its destined, lovely flowering.
And like the sweeter plants
So swiftly sensitive
To all that is . . .
The round-and-all-about . . .
Wherein, though moving,
All are fixed,
As surely as the lily or the mignonette.
And from which, like them,
We draw our seasoned sustenance
Of body
And of soul.

Yet seeking that that is not . . .
And dreaming that that may not be.

Oh, plant!
Dear, human plant!
Lift up your leaves!
Take root!
Aspire again!
Keep heart!
Keep faith!
Dare look into the sun,
Your face to his
As now.
Dare woo and win all life and light,
Dare drink the rain and wind,
Dare grow.
Presume again the dream!
Produce the bloom!
Bring forth the fruit!
Oh, plant . . .
Oh, human plant . . .

Yet apart from telling her how much I thought of it —how truly sensitive to and understanding of life I knew it to be—it led to nothing more than that warm friendship that already existed between us. She knew that I saw her for what she was—the aspirant, the dreamer, one who looked out with wide, clear, sensitive eyes upon the mystery of life and paused to wonder at and meditate upon now this, now that, and yet to know that life is not to be understood—that for man it re-

mains, and must remain, an insoluble secret, his one approach the door of beauty.

Somewhere farther back I asked you to remember a certain journalist—one of the group by which I found her surrounded at the first dinner in her apartment that I ever attended. An interesting fellow this—worthy, as time was to prove (to me, at least), of a separate paper. And yet it can never be written. I can only, and finally, deal with him here. But among so many whom I encountered and entertained from time to time in New York, Jethro was one who fixed himself in my mind, made a strong personal impression. And yet exactly why I sometimes asked myself. Assuredly he was not of a highly imaginative turn. Or was he? A little gross, a little material in his tastes, strong for parties, dinners, first nights, conventional doings in society and theatrical and bohemian circles, and yet also, as any one could tell after an hour with him, a most amazingly well-informed man, and one who went to primary sources in history, science, and the arts for the information which guided him and gave him his place as an editor and journalist. But without, as I often thought, a certain valuable delicacy or sensitivity, without which . . . well . . . And yet with something a little rueful about him, too, as though, at times, and in the face of the upstanding, two-fisted animality, argumentative and critical vigor of him, one sensed or heard something—a sorrowful

little voice underground—a low, half-captured, half-evasive melody, or mood, or cry. I used to wonder.

And now, one day, some seven months after the poem and the difficulties which had driven Olive Brand to the East Side, and when, understandably enough, seeing that I had been south for the winter, I had not seen her in four months, there was a knock at my studio door, and outside it stood Jethro. He had just learned that I was back. He had something of importance to him that he wished to communicate to me.

"You're one of Olive's best friends, I know," he began.

"I hope so," I replied.

"Well, you don't know it, but we've been seeing a great deal of each other of late . . . well . . . we're going to get married, as soon as a little business in connection with her divorce can be arranged. It's almost settled now, and we want you to stand up with us, act as best man, if you will, when the time comes. She wants you to do it," and he looked at me as much as to say: This must be a surprise to you, I know, but so it is.

"Sure! Delighted! Congratulations!" I answered. "Say as much to Olive. But how about this, anyhow? I thought she couldn't get a divorce. What about the Honorable H. B. Brand?"

"All done and fixed," he said. "The trouble with Olive is that she's a damned bad manager. She makes herself look worse than she is. And all because she

hasn't managed right. But that's neither here nor there. We're going to get married just the same. I'm straightening out her affairs for her. I've just been to see that husband of hers, but before I went I took care to get a lot of affidavits from people who know something about him as well as her, some of whom he approached with money, by the way. That wouldn't look well in those Spokane papers if it were published there," he chuckled, "and anyhow, I felt all the time that he was bluffing. I hired a couple of lawyers out there, and between us we made him see the light. I told him that I wanted to marry Olive. He finally agreed to let her get a divorce over here in Jersey, and it'll all be fixed in a little while now. That's why I came around to see you to-day."

You could have knocked me flat with a very light blow. I couldn't get it, as the saying goes. But I certainly looked upon it as a happy outcome for Olive. For Jethro was in many respects such a substantial, dependable sort of a fellow, with means and brains, and if Olive had come to love him, why not? To be sure, she was not marrying a poet, nor yet a grand dramatic figure such as her very remarkable temperament might have entitled her to—but, after all, might there not be more to him than I had perceived? I began to meditate as to this.

. . . Meanwhile . . . they were married, and at the City Hall of all places, by the City Clerk, a friend of Jethro's and by virtue of his office legally entitled to

tie the knot. I was there and signed the certificate by request. Before this, however, Jethro had taken an entire house on the upper West Side and with Olive's aid and supervision had fixed it up. Books, books, books. A large, comfortable living room, with a fireplace; a dining room, a library and separate workrooms for Olive and Jethro on separate floors; several bedroom and bath suites; a new piano and victrola. And was I welcome there? They were always calling up to know when I was coming up for dinner. But the sight of either in their respective rôles of faithful husband and wife used to make me laugh. For, like Olive, Jethro had led no simple life.

Nevertheless, and from the beginning, I suspected, as well as sensed, that there was something more to this union than temperamental or emotional affinity, with all that that implies. Olive, as I knew, was not only sensitive but idealistic, and so what was it that first and last fixed her interest on Jethro? His mind? Was his mind as remarkable or as fascinating as hers? I knew it was not. His was a good, sound mind, and well-furnished intellectually. Also it was accompanied by an expansive, generous, and pagan temperament. But even so. Hers was a drifting, emotional, colorful, seeking thing that would not be likely to rest permanently anywhere. Or would it? As for his money, or his mental and physical assurance in the face of life and materiality, well, I could not really believe (especially after seeing Olive on the East Side), that

he was so needful to her, if at all. And if not, then what . . . ?

Often I studied each critically, and especially when they were together in their new home. Knowing Jethro and his interest in all night doings anywhere, as well as Olive's naturally varietistic temperament, I was given to venturing thinly veiled commentaries. "How do you explain all this, Olive? I thought you of all people would find the simple home life, this broom and duster stuff, a little . . . well . . . you know . . . say mentally insubstantial, or lacking in luster, maybe," to which she would reply, as a rule, with her eyes only, or a quizzical, Mona-Lisa-like smile. And such eyes—the long, dark, oriental, and so undecipherable, eye. But once she said: "Oh, there is more in heaven and earth than is . . . you know."

"I thought as much," I replied.

And to Jethro, seeing him cooking in the kitchen one night, a white apron around his ample waist: "This is beyond me. How the night clubs must mourn the loss of their most enthusiastic patron!"

"In the first place," he replied, "I am basting a ham. In the second, you're trying to sow seeds of discord in this poppy patch. Have a heart!"

But for all my doubts they appeared to understand each other. And presently—in the course of a year—the underlying essence became more and more apparent. I had not sensed it, but before going over to journalism completely Jethro had had bright dreams of

becoming a writer. Short stories, plays, essays, as I gathered afterward from Olive, had been essayed by him, but to no effectual result. And privily, for all his outward bravado, he had grieved. And that, as I now sensed, was the thing that I had noted in him but had not understood—a mental voice of defeat. On the other hand, Olive, while dreaming after the same fashion, had actually, and although much younger, achieved more. True, she had not achieved publication as yet, but in her desk were many poems, essays, some short stories and a play even, that needed little more than reshaping to give them their ultimate value. And these things, read by Jethro, and their real import gathered, had combined with a genuine affection as well as admiration for her to bring about that devotion which had resulted in marriage. She sensed his lacks, sympathized with his aspirations, and because of her affection for him had soon offered to coöperate with him in the labor of artistic production. They were to write plays, short stories, novels even, together. Poetry and the essay forms (having singular moods and opinions which these forms would best or most individually convey), she reserved to herself. And he, interested in science, philosophy, history, biography, and the like, preferred to reserve to himself certain constructive papers in those fields. But really, in his case, the play and the short story—more particularly the play—came first. And soon after their union they were hard at work on first one and then another, all of which had interest

and force, and one of which presently, in the second year of their marriage, achieved production.

But the excitement in Jethro! And the satisfaction! And the intense adoration, mounting almost to idolatry, for his brilliant wife! Night clubs? Pooh! Village parties? Who were these silly Villagers anyhow? A lot of wastrels, profitless dreamers and adventurers! Solid work! Solid achievement! That was the thing! A delicious, contenting union such as this, with one's friends gathering around and making of the new home a delightful salon. One could see him actually broadening and taking on security and assurance even under her encouraging influence, and half forgetting that he had ever been a dreaming, wastrel Villager himself.

But the days clock merrily, or dolefully, along, as you will. And time and chance happen to all of us. A year, two, three of this . . . with the gayest and most contented of groups centering around this new couple. And then, one day, the feelingless hand of Fate. I called Jethro on the telephone one morning to seek certain information I desired, and in passing he announced that Olive was not feeling well . . . a little cold, he thought, but nothing seroius . . . so long! But the next afternoon he called up to say that she was no better, worse even, and that he was becoming a little worried. She had developed a severe sore throat and some fever. There was a doctor coming now. Later that same evening I called, only to learn that he was then removing her to St. Luke's, and that in case I wished to go there

I would find her in a certain private room, the number of which he gave me.

I hurried to the hospital to see for myself. To my emotional relief I found her resting most comfortably and, because of Jethro's concern, amusedly, in one of those very simple hospital rooms for which they charge so much. But, at that, she appeared to have a temperature, and privately Jethro informed me that the doctor feared pneumonia. I jested with him about giving up so easily and returned to Olive, who talked only of getting up soon. In the past few weeks they had been planning a summer home on the Jersey coast. There was a certain inlet the very shore of which, to the water's edge, could be utilized for a lawn. A prospective breakfast room and three bedrooms were to command the morning sun rising out of the sea. They were planning a small dock, a motor boat, and all was to be reached from New York in a little over two hours. The following spring and summer, if I would, I was to visit them there.

But the next morning when I called, she was not so well—a little more fever—and that night she was babbling nonsense. A specialist had taken charge, and Jethro was depressed beyond words. He was waxy pale the while he pretended to hope. And the next day she was rational, but weaker. I called with flowers. We talked of various things, and now for the first time, since Jethro was not present, she appeared depressed. When I rallied her about her courage, she said: "Oh,

it isn't of myself I'm thinking. I feel sorry for Jack. He's been so much better off with me."

Exactly, I thought, but aloud, said: "I know it, Olive."

"I knew you did. You remember that poem I sent you?"

"I love it. It is beautiful, not because of me but because of you. I have it with me always."

"I wanted you to know. But I knew afterwards that it was a sort of farewell to you. You couldn't care for me enough, could you?"

"No, Olive," I replied, "not in that way. But you know how life is. We can't love where and when we would. But if you think I haven't thought you beautiful, or your mind and life wonderful . . . that I do not think so now. . . ."

She took my hands and held them. "Oh, I know, I know," she said, "so I thought it was best to do something for Jack. He needed me so."

"You have done everything for him," I said. "I have seen it."

"That is why I would like to go on," she said.

But the next day she was irrational. And the next. There were no more conversations. And at five one afternoon Jethro telephoned that she had died at four.

The usual obsequies—expansive, oppressive, dull. And after that a long trip for Jethro to Utah. Her parents had begged that her body be brought there. And to gratify them he had consented. Later, a calmer state

of mind; he pictured her parents, their real as well as their social reaction to her death and homecoming. For be it remembered that they had never been reconciled to her divorce and remarriage, nor to any of the things reported of her to them. But now that she was dead, their blood-grief was real enough—moving,—heartbreaking, so Jethro said—for they were so old, and she was of their happiest past. Yet once she was buried, he—Jethro—had been subjected, so he said, to a most damnable string of introductions and social encounters. This was because of the professor's desire to make clear to every one in his set in Salt Lake that things were not quite as bad as had been rumored. For here was Jethro, a very presentable man, indeed. And many references to the passing of Olive, together with accounts of her artistic interests.

"I stood it for two days," he said, "then I caught an early morning train for New York. I couldn't stand another hour. But they laid her," he continued, "on a slope above the city, where she can look down and see her old skating pond, and the school, and I guess she'll be all right there."

But the effect on Jethro! Quickly, and perhaps too thinly, I have hurried over the grim period in which he realized, all too blindingly, that she was gone; that never again anywhere in all time or space would he be permitted to repeat or enjoy the delightful relationship which had so fortified him against the dicing of fate and the lapse of time. He had been getting along so

well, so very well, with her, and she with him. Both, I think, had been truly happy—as much as two people well can be in this choppy, windy scene. But now this. And the big house with all her books, and his. Her music. Her writings. I called frequently to sit with him and cheer him up, if possible, but soon found that he could not really endure the house any longer. True, he was going to bring on his mother and sister, move to a new scene, perhaps, try and pull himself together and go on with his work. But I noted, as time passed, and although he did bring on his mother and sister, and they moved, still he could not successfully resume where, jointly, as in the plays and short stories, they had left off. Ah, no. He tried, I will admit. For something over a year, after the blow of her death had seemingly worn off, he wrote, wrote, wrote. And he read as never before, perhaps. But nothing came of it. One could see as well as feel it. He had no one to talk to, no one to share with him the, for him, difficult labor of composition. Quite frequently I heard of him at various bohemian parties. It was said that he was taking to drink and a somewhat loose life, but only partially was this true. The fact was that he was still trying, but with lapses. And then, due to a chance meeting with a medical investigator who lacked writing ability but who was hard upon the trail of the mystery of the human glands —endocrine and others—and their influence upon the human temperament and our social morals, he turned to labor for this man, and presently appeared not only

as this medico's public sponsor but scriptic interpreter. As he once said to me, he really did not know how sound it all was and where it would get, but it was interesting and it might lead eventually to some plays and stories.

But more and more, as I noticed, he seemed to be losing interest in everything. Life obtruded itself now not only as an insoluble but at times as a wholly contemptible mystery. The brevity of everything! The frailty and bestiality and clowning nonsensicality of Homo Sapiens at top and at bottom—his inane ambitions, his pathetic faiths and worse hopes! His astounding efforts to make something out of nothing! And a little more or less of one or another gland juice would turn a Lincoln, say, into a small-town loafer and joke! God! What were people living for, anyway? In spite of all their public professions, what did they really do privately when they fancied they were not seen? The lie of human purity, decency, morality, charity, brotherhood, parenthood! A wild, meaningless dance of lunatics in an asylum!

And with such a view, of course, drinking and partying—wheresoever and with whomsoever. His mother, a profound Christian Scientist, almost a healer, began to demonstrate "the truth" in regard to him; his sister to wonder and worry and at times to urge him to come home more, rest more, work more. But rather in vain, I think. He was now about as he was when Olive first

encountered him, only ten years older, less restrained, less hopeful, but still only forty-two.

One day at about this time he dropped in to see me. We talked of many things—his work, his future. There was some talk, of course, of endocrine glands and their social meaning. A book concerning them was to appear one day. But meanwhile he was not as well as he should be. A bend in the œsophagus—whatever that may mean—a slight enlargement of the liver—or so the X-ray showed. Certainly he looked flabby, and announced that he had cut out drink and late hours. His doctor had ordered this. But presently he was on Life again—its meaninglessness, its brevity.

"What you really need, Jack," I said, "is to find some girl who can understand you, and work with you. You would be all right if . . ."

"Sure, if I had a girl like Olive. I know. Well, I can't find her. There never was but one, I guess."

He got up to go. The look on his face was revealing —sad and yet resigned. I was suffused with pity.

In the spring I wrote him of a five-hundred-mile walk I proposed taking. I wanted him to join me for a few days. The letter in reply was the enthusiastic and yet plaintive commentary of one who felt he should do as much, yet could not negotiate it. The spirit was willing but . . . In the fall I invited him to the country, only to receive, after ten days, a letter from his sister. For two weeks, she said, he had been ill—for ten days unconscious. The last conscious thing he had done

was to read my letter and say that he would answer it when he got up. Since then, the aberration of fever, a high pulse and a temperature of 103 to 107, never less. And babbling of Olive, Olive, the days before he was married to her, and the days afterward. At the house, when I reached it, was a mutual friend, who told me that just before Jethro's illness he had been with him at his place in the country. And unfortunately he had started drinking, although when he came he said he would drink nothing. Then a slight cold, then fever, and instantly aberration.

"A funny thing," he said, "the moment he was out of his head he began talking of that wife of his—Olive Brand, you know."

"Yes, I know," I said.

"He talked of her all the time."

"Interesting," I said.

And upstairs on a hospital bed,—attendants, three doctors—there he was, babbling, babbling, babbling, as fever patients will. Now he was toasting some one—was everybody in on this—glasses up! Next he was marshaling a group into a car. Were all ready? Next, he wanted to go home. He must go home. Olive said . . . Next, it was his mother or sister, or both, for whom he was calling. I held his hand, looked, spoke. "Listen, Jack, see here! You know me. Sure, you know me." "Of course, I know you," he replied, his eyes clearing for a second. "It's . . ." and he spoke my name. It was farewell.

Fourteen more days and still alive, but "out of his senses," as the phrase runs. The same high fever, the same talk of Olive.

"A queer thing," his sister said to me. "This thing began just as Olive's did, with a slight sore throat and then this fever. On the sixth day, which was the day she died, we didn't expect him to live. His strength was nearly gone. And he talked of her all the time. I don't know what caused him to rally."

But on the twenty-ninth day of his fever, he died. On the way to his home I said to the taxi driver: "Go through the Park, across a Hundred Tenth, and up Broadway." Instead, to my surprise, he turned in at Morningside Heights and directly under the window of the hospital room in which Olive died. Only I was not aware of it until looking up, there it was. And then I said: "Olive, Olive. Can it really be that you would call him? Are you that sorry?"

ELLEN ADAMS WRYNN

Ellen Adams Wrynn

I FIRST came to know of her while editing one of the several magazines with which from time to time I have been connected. I had a story at once sensuous and exotic which required picturization. It concerned some form of adventure and love in Egypt, and I had been told that it would probably be illustrated most satisfactorily by her. Though not widely known, it was rumored that she was competent, and even exceptional. She was doing general illustration in order to obtain sufficient money to pursue her more important art dreams. Not having an art director at the time, I wrote her myself and asked her to come to see me. She did. And when I explained the nature of the story, she appeared temperamentally to respond to it—said she would like to try, and agreed to illustrate it for a nominal sum.

But what interested me most at the time was her personality. She was young, attractive, vigorous, and ambitious, more blonde than brunette, but certainly not so fair as dark—a chestnut blonde. She smiled in a bubbly, cheerful way as we talked, the while in some roundabout fashion she came to tell me that she was from Philadelphia and had had all of her art training in the School of Design there. Also that in

some conventional art exhibit then holding she had a picture "on the line." If I were up that way at any time she would be glad to have me look at it. And if I would drop in at her studio at any time, she would be glad to show me some other things she had done. Before she left we had come to be quite good friends, and I decided that one day I would look in on her. I liked her, though my first impression was of just another good-looking girl interested in art and the bohemian life of the strugglers in the art world of that day, and that probably her enthusiasm would not outlast the numerous trials and tribulations of those who essay illustration and painting in general. But I was wrong.

Then one day, chancing to attend the exhibit mentioned, I looked up her picture and found it to be a rather charmingly conceived and arranged boudoir scene, albeit in the conventional manner of the day. That is, there was nothing really new in subject or treatment. None the less, the colors and arrangement were pleasing—a rounded, sensual girl of some eighteen years of age, looking not wholly unlike herself, seated before a three-panel dressing table giving the finishing touches to her complexion. One would have said that the artist herself was enamored of the delicate colors and seductive pose, so adroitly were the arms and torso and thighs warmly and yet conservatively hinted at—the conservatism if not the adroitness of the eighteen-nineties and earlier. In fact, I

had a sense of something exotic, physically stirring, and yet at the same time repressed, in picture and artist. Indeed, I thought! And decided that I would look her up and if possible strengthen this tentative friendship.

But before doing so I chanced upon another Philadelphia derivative of that day—a young illustrator who later achieved current if not permanent distinction in the art world. And choosing to mention Miss Adams and her work, he confided: "Oh, Ellen! Sure, I know her. We studied in the same class together. How is she? Clever, all right! Lots of grit and pluck, I'll say!" And when I asked as to the why of this last, he added: "Well, she's had a pretty hard time of it. Her father is only a street-car conductor and didn't want her to monkey with painting. I don't know what's become of him. He wanted her to work in a store," he laughed, "and then she ran away. And one of her brothers—well, you know, family stuff—got in some trouble in connection with a car barn robbery over there. It was all in the papers at the time or I wouldn't mention it. But it didn't down Ellen very much. I used to know her in school, you see, afterwards. She first got some newspaper drawing to do over there and now I see her stuff in the magazines. Clever, too. If you see her, say hello for me." And off he walked, very gay and dapper and assured because of a recent and seemingly durable success of his own.

This naturally tended to fix Ellen Adams in my mind, casting, for me at least, a shade of glamour or romance over her. For how many girls of that day, handicapped by such a family background would be fighting a winning fight in art and being as brisk and cheerful about it as was she? Very likely, there was a real future before her. Besides, for all her early and difficult experience, she was really so attractive, suggesting in face and form, though not exactly in manner, as I thought at the time, something of the girl before the mirror whom she had painted. Indeed, I thought, might it not be a daydream of herself as she would like to be? Rich, comfortable, at peace and ease with all the world?

Thereafter one day, being in this mood about her, (although, as I discovered in due time, she was in no such mood in regard to me), I called upon her in her studio in the Van Dyck Apartments in Eighth Avenue. It was a lovely warm afternoon in June or July and my excuse was that I was wishing to see how the drawings were progressing, if at all. Somewhat to my surprise, I found her cooking or baking something behind a brightly-curtained corner—her kitchenette, as I learned. And she herself in a light, flouncy dress, partially covered by a bright little apron. Ah, a guest is expected here, I thought. Some male, by damn! Then I am too late or too early. The best I can do is to make this look to be a purely business call and let it go at that.

To my agreeable surprise, though, it was not entirely so. The cake—it was that which was baking—was for a studio party down the hall. She was baking it for a girl friend, she told me, and gurgled cheerily as she did so. I noted the roundness of her throat and chin, also little beads of perspiration on her forehead.

"I don't mind cooking," she commented. "I love it, but not on a day like this. I'm through now, though, except for watching the oven for a half hour or so. But won't you sit down? And I'll get this flour off my hands." And she disappeared behind the curtains.

Interested in youth and romance and her particular type of beauty I was especially intrigued by the airy grace and color of the entire studio world in which she moved here. To think that New York contained such airy, colorful places as this! And with such dream girls as Ellen painting and playing away at life! How I longed to be of it all, yet made believe that it was business and business only that had brought me.

But presently she returned and showed me one of the three sketches contracted for. And very good I thought it, too. And then because she appeared not averse to general conversation, we talked on and on and I was shown more of her work. Also a girl neighbor—a slim, treacherous hoyden, who entered and posed about—joining in our conversation. I sensed varietism here, a pagan and a gay life of which Ellen and this Miss Gaines and evidently some others were a part. But being too shy—or at least not sufficiently

cavalier—to thrust myself into this scene, I was presently allowed to depart the while I was wishing and wishing that I might stay.

One thing and another interfering, I did not hear of or see Ellen again for several years. During this time, however, I learned that she had married a young broker whom she had met here in New York and that they were living in much comfort, and even luxury, in an expensive apartment in Gramercy Park. Sometime later, of a Sunday afternoon I chanced upon them, in that vicinity, out for a stroll. And a fine, healthy, handsome, carefully dressed and carefully mannered young husband it was who was with her —just the type of person, I now decided, I would have imagined Ellen marrying—instead of me, say—no fool of a mooning editor but a man of practical ability as well as some social position and safe within the conventions and traditions of his profession and social world—most careful, in short, of his manners, money and position. They had a dog which he was leading on a leash. And both appeared to be very happy, or at least I thought so—apparently both well within the flush and pleasure of young married life, content with themselves and all the world. We chatted formally and I learned that there was a baby, a girl. Also that Ellen had not stopped illustrating by any means. On the contrary, she was really doing more of it than she had expected to do at the time I last saw her. Also she was still painting, but not quite so much. Probably, I

thought, she had begun to doubt whether she had found herself. Maybe her marriage had done that for her. For I felt that apart from a certain physical charm, this man Wrynn (for that was his name) could have no real meaning for her. There was that about her which said that she had married him, possibly semi-consciously, for a few very definite reasons. He was young, good-looking, vigorous, and rather illusioned. He gave her a form of worship—sex worship—which she probably required at the time. Also a social position such as she had never known. None the less, as I fancied, this could not be much more than an interlude, or if more, a very dangerous adventure. I could feel it.

Four years more elapsed before I saw Ellen again. In the interim, as I learned from others, several interesting changes had taken place. First, she had divorced her husband, or rather because of incompatibility they had agreed to separate, and he, or rather his mother for him, had taken the little girl, since apparently Ellen wished to be free to paint again. Next, she had since become interested in a young painter whom I had known before ever I knew her—a very serious, slow, and determined person who loved to brood on beauty, landscapes principally, and who sought to interpret them as best he could. Frankly, on hearing this I wondered, because socially, or let us say diplomatically—since a flair for things social may usually be described as a matter of diplomacy—this Jimmie Race contrasted so poorly with her first choice. While of a better family

than her discarded husband, he seemed to be much more remote from anything and everything which smacked of social show or gayety. As I saw him, he no more than Wrynn was exactly in the picture with her. He was too slight, too delicate, too slow. She by now if not exactly robust, was vigorous and dynamic. In art, as yet he was not successful, merely essaying the rocky path to Parnassus, the crown of which he hoped to achieve. Still, and quite definitely, Ellen and many others believed in him. I myself felt that should he continue in the vein then engrossing him, he should most certainly come to be heard of. His studio on Fourteenth Street was a decidedly spare and colorless affair, and he eschewed all but the plainest clothes and fare. In addition to painting he was a student of philosophy and a reader of much poetry, of which he liked to talk. Also he was greatly despondent at times and on such occasions drank a great deal—an appetite which later I came to believe was greatly nourished by his fear or his conviction that he was destined not to interpret his moods in regard to nature in any great way.

Therefore, as I say, though surprised at Ellen's association with him, I decided at once that she had returned to the field for which plainly in her early youth she had made sacrifice. And such, as I gathered from a conversation I had with her at that time, was the truth. We met at a party and in a sudden burst of confidence due to drinking, she told me of her ex-

husband and her life since last I had seen her. Actually, (I am more or less interpreting her here), she could not say why she had married Walter Wrynn. In part as she said, it was because she was lonely and a little conventional. She had not at the time I first knew her wholly relished the easy bohemian world in which she found herself, nor had she then rid herself of the, as she described it to me, foolish notion that marriage was the essential as well as the unescapable fate of every American girl. And that, in part, drove her into marriage. At the same time she desired the delight of sex as well as the respect and material prosperity and social advancement that sometimes went with marriage for some. In considering Wrynn, and in addition to being quite infatuated with him at first, she had decided that all of these were to be hers, as indeed they were for a time. Then after two or three years she concluded that almost all of this was a reprehensible illusion or mistake and that it would have been better for her, artistically at least, had she stuck to her painting and illustrating and, ad interim, assuming that she must, have given herself to any, or at least one, man to whom she felt drawn. At worst, she might have waited for a temperament such as Race's, about whom at this time, as I could see, she was prepared to enthuse, yet whom she had only seen for the first time six months before. For Wrynn, as excellent as he was, was little more than a handsome and charming distraction which kept her thoughts from what she really

desired to do, whereas Jimmie Race, whom she liked very much, but no more than that, was one with whom she could exchange the most intricate ideas in regard to art and, better yet, give as well as receive. Also in the present instance it was Jimmie and not she who had been lonely, and that had intrigued her. Again, it was she who was craving the spiritual depth or sincerity with which Race out of many at least approached art. She admired him.

Now, however, as I learned, she would not attempt to say whether she was an artist or even destined to be one. She had started so poorly, but she would so much like to try again. And at least now she was not wasting her time matrimonially, attempting the silly business of wife and mother and social flutterings into the bargain, when she had no flair for either and was merely making herself and another miserable. For miserable she and Wrynn had been, as she now insisted, and except for their divorce would so have remained, since he believed in the permanency of marriage as well as its extreme value to every woman as an opportunity for social ease and motherhood, while she did not. Worse, there had been arguments as to that as well as regarding her duty toward her baby. But thanks be, she was out of all that now, and the next few years were to tell whether she was to do anything artistic or not. For decidedly, as she insisted, she had an unquenchable and quite consuming desire to paint. Only, unlike some, she would not persistently delude

herself as to that, she said. She, and very likely Jimmie Race also were presently journeying to Paris. There as neighbors and friends,—no more, they were to study as well as paint in their chosen fields. And then, well, time would tell. Either she would do work eminently satisfactory to herself, regardless of what the public thought of it, or she would forsake art and turn to something like business or marriage, or anything, in order to avoid being a futile worker in a field already overcrowded with futile workers as she saw it. I was very much impressed with this conversation, (although, as I recall it, she was a little tipsy at the time), and remembered it very clearly for, well, until this very hour, as you see.

But another thought that came to me at this time was this—that Jimmie Race, inclusive of his spiritual elevation and artistic earnestness, was of no real import to her and would not endure, since it was not spiritual elevation alone, or artistic earnestness either that she needed but a combination of these with a material strength which she could truly respect and this Jimmie had not. He was too frail, wistful, foggy. Really she was giving to him of her strength rather than he of his to her and what she needed was just that to bring her back to her artistic self. Like Wrynn, Race was little more than a contrary phase to something of which she was heartily sick at the moment.

But now another change. About the first or second year of this contact with Race she and he went to

Paris. This, as I gathered afterward, was in the wake of a new and disturbing art movement that had come to life over there and rumors of which were even then (1907 and earlier) drifting to our shores—ructions consequent upon the presence in Paris of certain contesting and yet somehow harmonious groups—Post-Impressionists, Neo-Impressionists, Cubists, Futurists, and what not—whose points of view and general artistic anarchism seemed almost certain to spell the doom of all serious, worthy traditional art. Was the artistic world of Europe really going mad? So cabled and wrote many an art correspondent. And it was because of some hints of this that these two went abroad in 1907, and it was in Paris that they established themselves, in separate studios, as I afterwards learned.

While, exactly at this point I should like to descant on this great art change and its significance, I must pause to say that I did not again encounter Ellen until 1912, and during that time many changes in my own life which brought me wandering and free to both London and Paris. But just before that, in the fall of 1910, while walking through one of the large department stores of Philadelphia I had been attracted by four huge panels, all related in theme and progressively arranged above four openings or aisles which led from one half of the building to the other. They were extremely decorative and to my inexperienced eye done in a new and most arresting manner. It has been said that you may not have seen a man or woman or a land-

scape such as Cézanne shows in his canvases, but after seeing them you can never forget them, for you will see them again in life. I would not be willing to admit the truth of this, but certainly here in this department store and subsequently—(one year later to be exact)—in the Grafton Galleries in London, and subsequently in the studios of Paris (including, by the way, the studio of Ellen Adams Wrynn), I saw many things which were not unakin to these. The panels were—to clear this up a bit,—scenes from Parisian life. One showed an interesting group at the race course, in most divergent and startlingly colored costumes, waiting near the rail before the grandstand for the horses to start. The second was early dinner or late tea out of doors, at "the Green Hour," as they say in Paris, before one of the smart rural restaurants of Paris, and presenting just such people as appeared in the first panel, probably on their way home. The third was a street rout or scene in the Bois—cabs and hansoms fluttering here and there in clouds, literally throngs of faces, coats, elbows, legs, hats, upon an adjacent sidewalk, and moving, moving as in a dream. And the last was a mass of dancers in the Bal Bullier, really moving and really dancing, their hats, faces, dresses, bare arms, legs, suggesting a kind of mulch or mush of life. And each panel signed: Ellen Adams Wrynn.

"Hello," I half exclaimed. "Now what do you know about this? Such colors! Such shouting, yelling contrasts!" I was dumbfounded, really, for it was so en-

tirely different from anything I had ever seen signed by her or done or presented in America or elsewhere up to that time, and hence to me most refreshing and even fascinating. So this was what all this palaver about this new French art which she and Race had gone to Paris to study was about. But what a conversion for Ellen Adams and more so for Jimmie Race, assuming that by any chance he had been converted. (As time proved, he had not been.) But gee! The light, the space, the daring, the force, the raw reds, greens, blues, mauves, whites, yellows! Good Lord, no mere savory impaste here! No conservative and so traditional modulation of tones: no rich couch of underpainting. Instead, all glaring, direct, resonant—a presentation so literal as to be meaningless for some. And yet for me most thrilling, suggesting as it did a sense of life and beauty that in itself constituted an emotion of significance and respectability. And all this was signed very clearly in the lower right-hand corner: Ellen Adams Wrynn! At first I couldn't get it. What the devil? I hadn't thought she was like that—so much force and fire in her. Remarkable. But since when, pray, had she begun to do things like these? And what an amazing development! Frankly, it was all so stirring and provoking that I wished now and at once that I might encounter her once more, or see Paris and all of this.

And then, as I have said, in the following year (1912) I visited England and France and my path did

cross hers again in Paris. But before that, in London—at the Grafton Galleries, if I recall aright—I attended the first show of the then so-called Post-Impressionists which was at that time scandalizing, nauseating or amusing all London. Cézanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Matisse, Picasso and many others whose names escape me now, were represented by one or more examples. I recall pausing in utter amazement before "A Wayside Christ," by Van Gogh, I believe. "A raw, bloody peasant hung on a pole," as some one present described it. And that was exactly the way it struck me at first, only with this in its favor, that it was much more in accord with my idea of what a son of man crucified would be than the anæmic and ornately glorified figures with which the Catholic hierarchy has plastered the world. In short, a tortured mass of wood, head, arms, torso, legs, feet. A face the like of which might have been seen on a tortured and none too civilized laborer or convict. Mouth, cheeks, chin, all horribly slued by pain. Yet alive with character, powerful or horrible or disgusting, as you will, but character. And the whole rendered in a sequence of high colors. I hovered about, fixed by the artistic cruelty as well as power.

But this was not all. An ancient hag, for instance, the flesh like steel or gray iron, labeled "A Portrait of Miss N." The nude body of a woman lying on a couch that looked like an arrangement of dirty tin pans strung together in some strange fashion, and jangling.

There was also a sculptured head labeled "Rom" that looked like some monstrosity out of a wax-works. I could scarcely believe what I saw. And the assembled throng all curious, nearly all shocked, and full of comments, many haw-hawing after the fashion of yokels at a sideshow or before a nude.

And the comments!

"Oh, there is some little something to Cézanne and Gauguin. And I have no quarrel with Van Gogh's surfaces. Picasso can paint to a certain extent. But as for drawing, harmony! A child could do as well. I believe they pride themselves in some instances on achieving the child viewpoint."

Or: "A painting can be a damned piece of barbarism even if it does manage to attract attention. Loud braying is not singing."

Or: "They insist that they trust to atmosphere to blend raw colors for the eye. But the temperamental blending which the eye achieves is beyond them. They can't draw and they can't harmonize. It's an easy way for people who can't paint to achieve notoriety."

For the moment, as I hereby admit, I was troubled, inclined to agree with some of the remarks I heard. For, as I later saw, I was still in tow to all of the conventional portrait and genre work of the older schools —the smooth, melting, glossy things that fill our galleries and have been our art. Afterwards, when the first shock of this had worn off, I could get neither the subjects nor the method out of mind, particularly the

method. And after a while I asked myself: What about these things? Are they not after all somewhat in step with what I actually see here and there in life? Not all is as Ingres would do it, say, or Vermeer. There are strange, trying, gloomy, even rancid, effects on every hand. What about these? And what is it that I personally am trying to do? A smooth countess with a white book in a long green lap? A lady absorbed by a Persian bowl filled with orchids? Not at all! And by degrees I came to see that however offensive (like war, say), here was something new, vigorous, tonic. These things, I said, grim and ugly though they may be, most of them, are destined to blow the breath of life into older forms. They will have a great effect. I could feel that this violent, raucous protest against violet blues and delicate draperies was destined to make stronger the art sense and touch everywhere.

More interesting still, though, in this exhibition I encountered a picture by Ellen Adams Wrynn. It was very different from the floreate and I might even say tropic effects of the panels which I had seen in America. It was a portrait of a girl, twenty-four to thirty, say, the flesh of the arms, shoulders, neck and face most effectively and yet swiftly suggested by a few brush strokes. She was seated on an ordinary kitchen chair, part of one knee and parts of both arms only showing. Her red hair was adorned by a black bow. The dress was green with a black edging around the neck. And there was a bluish-green background

with many jewel-like hints and touches in it, yet looking as though it might have been done in fifteen minutes. I liked it. It was one of the few sane, appealing things there, yet obviously in the new manner. So this is what she is doing in Paris, I thought. She has gone completely over to this new movement.

But what interested me even more than this picture was the fact that the friend who had accompanied me to this exhibition was, as he now told me, also acquainted with Ellen Wrynn, her work and some other things in connection with her. He had met her in Paris a few years before to which place as a life-loving Londoner he frequently repaired. "Oh, yes, Ellen!" he said. "One of your American converts to the new movement. A fairly interesting woman and a pretty good painter, or she used to be—I can't go all of this new stuff. But she and Keir McKail are the best of friends. I can give you letters of introduction to both of them when you go over."

"But I already know her," I explained. "Only who is Keir McKail?"

"You know her and you don't know McKail? That's interesting. How long since you've seen her?"

"Oh, I saw her in America about four years ago."

"Oh, well, that explains it. She must have met McKail since she came to Paris. In fact, I know she did. I met them three years ago. But there is one of McKail's things in the next room if you haven't seen

it. Suppose we take a look." And he led a return pilgrimage.

"But who is McKail?" I insisted. "This interests me for various reasons."

"Oh, McKail. Oh, a Scotch artist who has been on the continent for years. Hails from Dundee. Speaks with a burr. Has a strong, broad trudging figure and a will of iron. He was once an apprentice to an iron monger, but escaped into art. He has spent most of his life in Paris. And he was one of the earliest disciples of this revolt, but not one of its best representatives. Just the same, a fascinating fellow. Looks a little like a brawny-legged Scotch soldier, but an artist to his finger tips. He's a little tired of playing up to these Frenchmen, I think, but he's not content to return and paint in Scotland either. Who would be? But if you're going over there you are sure to meet him. Here you are!"

He paused before a canvas. A nude, by the way, quite bony and unattractive, the posture excruciating; a leg raised from the floor in a wide curve; the colors browns, blacks, grays. Curiously, while in the spirit of the new movement, it was not as interesting to me as Ellen's picture, neither as liberated nor as daring or facile. But better painted—the atmosphere, I mean—and suggesting that if the artist worked with difficulty, and certainly without dash, in this field, still he could paint and paint well in another. One could feel it. There was here a certain hard, defiant something that

was interesting. I was, as I might say, impressed and yet not really pleased.

But presently my friend began explaining some more: "Since you're interested in Ellen, you'll be interested in knowing something more about McKail. He is more of an artist than she is, to my way of thinking, although he may never establish the fact. He is too sincere and too violent. Why, he has almost forgotten the existence of the old stuff in this really new field already, and yet he painted in that manner for fifteen years. He can't even mention those earlier fellows in this line—Monet, Manet, Degas, Renoir, and that crowd—without cursing. And even Cézanne, Gauguin, and Van Gogh are old masters as compared, for instance and for him, to Matisse, Picasso, Van Dougen and a few others. He considers Matisse the last word as to line, Picasso as a colorist." (He laughed at this, for we had just been looking at two of Picasso's somber studies. I too laughed.) "He now sees the world and mankind in cubes and pyramids, as does Picasso. The interesting thing is that although he doesn't work well in this field himself, he has imbued Ellen with his ideals, and to my way of thinking she realizes them better than he himself does. She isn't so driving, so threatening, so uncompromising. And she's more exotic and emotional and sensual—oh, much more. He's really cold compared to her. And so she paints in this new mood with an easier technique and with more romance and beauty. But not with his sin-

cerity and skill. It isn't in her. He paints (like most of these fellows who are making a stir over there now) as though he were trying to prove something, as though he would like to insult any one who had ever painted in any other way. But she paints in this new way because it suits and expresses her, is just like her in many ways, I think."

Excellent, I thought! Then at last Ellen has really found herself and is or will be a success, I suppose. I wondered.

"By the way," I asked, "did you ever hear of a painter over there named James Race? A young American?"

He shook his head. "I never did." At the same time he gave me Ellen's address. "You'll find her in the Boulevard Rochechouart—charming place. And McKail somewhere near. They are really living together only not in the same studio. His and her studios are not far apart, though, a block or so. They . . . well, you know. But you'll find him well worth knowing, more interesting in some ways than she is."

A month or two later I journeyed to Paris and having but few American friends there, among the first persons I sought out was Ellen. I found her, after appropriate correspondence, in the Boulevard Rochechouart in the Montmartre region. And McKail nearby, as my friend had said. And right pleased she appeared to see me. Her studio was really delightful, large, airy, gay, with great paintings and startling fabrics scattered on the walls, floors, chairs. And all within

one of those old courts so common in Paris, where gate, bell, and concierge combine to effect a certain degree of privacy. On my being announced, as I recall, she came to the head of the stairs and called down to me. And as I ascended, I looked at her. More rounded, more robust, but still very attractive, and smiling, a certain gay insouciance that she never had in America impressing me at once. Ah, development, I thought. She is practiced now, more successful, in consequence stronger. Yet little if any of the old charm worn off. Rather her manner, if anything, was more spirited than in her youth. In short, I found very few traces of the raw girl whom I had first encountered in New York.

But what interested me almost as much as she herself now was this studio, or rather its contents. A very pleasant place, with high windows and a little balcony overlooking the wide, clean boulevard. And without and within a sense of the old, gay, thrifty Paris of the years just preceding the Great War. Unlike her first small studio in New York, where her pictures had been discreetly pushed into a corner, faces to the wall, her walls here carried very large canvases of her own, at least three of them eight by fifteen.

I spoke at once of her panels in Philadelphia. "Oh, yes," she said, quite simply. "I sold them for almost nothing for advertising purposes about three years ago. They were among the first things I did here. Mr. S. was over here and wanted something that would startle the Americans. I wish I had them back now. They

aren't exactly as I would do them. I've offered to paint four new ones for them, but Mr. S. won't hear of it. He thinks I want to do them differently, and of course I do." She laughed.

At once we plunged into the new art movement. From the paintings on the walls I could see that not only was she a devotee of the movement itself but of its greatest and most divergent apostle and prophet, Picasso—the same who was apparently so heavily impressing McKail. In fact, one of the most attractive pictures on her walls at the moment was a pyramidal symphony, or so I might call it—two synchronized dancers, every line and angle accommodated to one or more of the triangular faces of a pyramid. And seeing me looking at it she began:

"Oh, yes, it was not so very long after I came over here that I became a convert. Jimmie—you remember Jimmie Race?—well, he just couldn't endure them and he went back the same year. But after my first prejudice had worn off, I saw how very much more conscious of reality it all is, how much more vigorous and alive. Of course, it is attracting just thousands of charlatans now, but not any more than the older forms of painting have always attracted them, I presume."

"Whom do you consider as leaders in this new art?" I asked, thinking at the same time of Jimmie Race and Keir McKail and wondering about McKail.

"Matisse and Picasso, of course, only I see them as representatives of two different methods, really. Matisse

always sees the decorative and makes you see it. He returns to the subject in art and presents it with intensity. Picasso has thrown off the influence of Matisse and gone his own way. He sees nearly everything in terms of cubes and pyramids." I looked at another of the accentuated pyramidal pictures on her walls. "Yes," she added, "I've gone over to him. I see it that way now, clearly. I hadn't been over here three months before I realized how shallow everything I had been doing up to that time really was."

My mind went back to Race and his quiet method of painting in the old tradition, a method which had once interested her so much. But now not a word about him or that. Rather, presently, and since I had been invited to dinner, she told me that she had also invited for this occasion one Keir McKail, an artist friend; one whose work she admired greatly. And so on, and so on. And it was not long before I could gather from the general drift of the conversation that he was something more than a friend—a warm favorite, one who was a part of her daily life. He had a studio in the Place Pigalle, not so very far away, she said. He was Scotch, a convert to the new school before she met him. He also was very much interested by Picasso. In fact, they had met in his atelier. And presently she added that McKail was really a character—so strong, simple, honest, a little brusque and Scotch but an artist to his finger tips, as I would learn if I were about him much.

Presently in came McKail, short, stocky, strong, de-

fiant even. And all was as she said. He was—your glen and heather Scotchman; broad-shouldered, a most determined and forceful man of about thirty-five or forty. But what a sharp contrast to Wrynn and Race—so careless this one of his dress and the general effect his manner might produce. I have always thought since that he was almost too sullen and dogmatic without meaning to be so—that is, without meaning to be so offensively. His manner on this occasion was brusque and uncompromising. And by the way he threw his hat and cane into one corner I could see that he was her familiar, the man for whom she lived and worked now, her mental and emotional master, so to speak. Her eyes followed him affectionately and considerately wherever he went or was, which was interesting in her. My London friend had prepared me for all this yet I was so interested that I soon forgot his burr. In subsequent conversations it developed that he had lived and worked in many places—Paris, Rome, Munich, Vienna, London. He liked the Scotch but said he couldn't live with them. There was no art sense there, no liberality of spirit. The English he pronounced too self-centered and reactionary. Paris, the continent, these suited him best.

Having known his predecessors, and from the way Ellen studied him and after a fashion danced attendance on him, I observed him narrowly. And I could see that at last and probably for good she was dominated by one who was not likely to take her too

seriously, not he. Race and Wrynn? Pooh! The two of them completely obliterated. It was Keir here and Keir there. Had he seen about the frames for two pictures of his that should have been framed and sent off long ago? Had he consulted with some one—I forget the name—with whom he was supposed to have consulted that day? I must see Keir's studio. It was much more charming than hers. One of these days, if I stayed long enough, we'd have dinner over there. Sometimes they ate there, sometimes here. I gathered from this that although they occupied separate studios they made no secret of the fact that their social life was more or less in common. Some of his belongings as I plainly saw were here and later I noted some of hers there. Sometimes breakfast was eaten there, sometimes here. But most clearly of all I gathered that McKail was the present master of this double ménage; that she was really and truly and deeply in love with him; that he commanded her life and her moods more than they had ever been commanded by any one.

And yet, too, I had the feeling that after his rough determined manner, he cared for her also, only not quite as much as she cared for him. At least, it wasn't so obvious. He was too silent, recessive, subdued. And, in spite of many conversations I had with him later and when we were alone, I could not make clear to myself whether it was more an affectionate friendship on his part than love. Ellen was a nice girl! he said. Good, too. They found life together so far quite satisfac-

tory. She liked to think that she was doing great things. And in a way she was expressing herself through a medium unfortunately invented by others; but which her warm, rich temperament was tending to turn into something almost her own,—individualizing all that she did. Thus I saw that he was not stingy if not exactly lavish with his praise. Obviously he liked her immensely. They understood each other, he said, and what's more, went about together a great deal. Also that as he saw her, she was a fine, big, intelligent woman.

The best thing about him, as I soon found, was his attitude toward art. For just as my friend in London had explained, he insisted that he had broken away from all of the old forms, and even the newest leaders, and was trying to work out something for himself. And when I visited his studio, which I did several times apart from Ellen, I found that this was true. There were still lifes, landscapes in water color and oil, and figure pieces—queer attempts at solidity, mass, depth, often entirely apart from beauty. One of his repeated convictions was that art should not be just a surface; that it had in addition to length and breadth, thickness, and when well done (inspired) this thickness—or internal solidity, as it were, and the artistic joy which should follow its achievement could be transferred in a mood to another. I confess that the truth if not the joy of his claim got over to me visually in some of his things. Some of

his canvases were as large as four by five feet, but for the most part they were much smaller, yet all intensely painted, mainly in somber slates and grays and greens, so that when you looked at them you began to wonder where all the color in the world had gone to, why it eluded him so. Indeed, the things he did were done with infinite toil, in a dogged, fighting mood, as I thought; in short, more to conquer than to paint, to make paint do his will, express his sense of reality. Most of them—as I saw them, at least—lacked the easy sense of line and arrangement, of breadth and scope and joy in color and form which marked all of Ellen's work. In fact, one of the things that divided their methods completely was his mastery of paint as such —paint that expressed solidity, depth. Another, her love of line and color, regardless of depth or truth, even. It was her recognition of this mastery of his that caused her to stand in such profound awe of him. In short, as I saw for myself afterward, he could paint better than she could, if with less subject imagination, less flair, less romance.

Yet while I knew that technically he was the better painter, I liked Ellen's work best. It was at once less real and more appealing, thrilling in its exotic color and thought at times. Yet when once a little later I hinted to her that such was my thought, she as much as belittled my judgment. Keir's surfaces were so deeply and solidly built up, she pointed out. They were so true. Naturally, he avoided with almost religious aus-

terity any suggestion of the sterile eccentricities that spoiled so much of the work of others then, but therein lay his true greatness, which at some time or other must be recognized. Solid paint was what he was after—the solid things behind the paint—whereas beneath her surfaces was no real depth. She would like to achieve it, of course, but as yet she had not been able to do so. I had never heard her talk so about any other and marveled at this new artistic modesty, if not self-abnegation.

During that spring I saw not a little of both of them. Together we saw much of Paris—Notre Dame, St. Chapelle, St. Etienne du Mont, the Madeleine, to say nothing of some of the more amusing if less spectacular restaurants and dance halls. In so far as their lives were concerned, they did about as they pleased. Both came and went as they chose. He included her in his affairs or not, as he wished, and she likewise. He criticized her work, and that most coldly at times, saying that it was too floreate, too exotic, that she was too much impressed by the enthusiasm and the manners of one futuristic leader and another. She rarely said anything about his things save that they were fine.

Yet there was something here in connection with these two, as I soon found, that was not just art. A physical and most likely even a mental dominance of Ellen by McKail, and yet not against her will. On the contrary, and this after her (in America) previous dom-

inance of Wrynn and Race, which had permitted her easily and without a qualm apparently, to discard both. But not so with McKail. This sturdy and to me none-too-prepossessing Scotchman was plainly as the light of the world to her. She possessed, as I knew, a clear and colorful mind, especially where the syntheses of art were concerned. None the less, and regardless of this, one felt in her when he was at hand a certain not so much diffidence as diplomacy in regard to what she thought and said. Thus, if at any point he chose to contradict, definitely and dourly as was his way at times, instead of battling with him, as most certainly would have been her way with Race or myself, she fell silent or veered the argument to some slightly different angle which permitted of its gliding off harmlessly. And as for other things—places to dine or a person or thing to visit or see, or a place or time to meet, or how much of this or that was to be devoted to anything—it was McKail and not Ellen who decided. And in the main whether present or absent.

And now I noticed, or rather felt, what I had noticed and felt the first time I visited her in her New York studio in Eighth Avenue. There was a certain homey femininity about her which puzzled me. For how came this unity of something extremely feminine with these quite powerful and almost gross canvases on her walls? For they were not only lush and fecund and floreate—canvases which might well spring of an aphrodisiac mood—but broad and comprehensive and

strong; broader and more comprehensive and, as I have said, more colorful and imaginative than anything which came from McKail. Yet, with all this, an exceedingly soft, feminine, and even sensuous voice and manner, a body that suggested graceful rhythms of flesh; eyes, arms, shoulders, neck, cheeks, all speaking of harmonies physical rather than mental. And with these, here in Paris and amid all this work, clothes that emphasized the purely feminine appeal of her—smooth, flowing, graceful dresses, aprons even, and of such delicate textures. And perfumes, traces of them, on her, in her studio. I studied her as much as I did her work, but without the ability to connect the two. McKail and herself I could connect easily, since apart from art they were so essentially masculine and feminine. But this other? I pondered over these two long after I left Paris, could never quite stop thinking about them.

And then—say a year and a half later—from Paris to New York came Amy Jean Mathews, another American painter, writer, poet and lover of life, who during a recent stay in Paris had seen quite a little of Ellen and McKail and their friends. And now she was full of news of a somewhat mixed character. Three of Ellen's canvases which she had had hung in the last spring salon had attracted a great deal of attention. Gorgeous combinations of figures and flowers and draperies and backgrounds of no particular land or time or clime, but breathing of an exotic dream

world of her own. And unquestionably more daringly and courageously done than anything else by her so far. To be sure, it was obvious that she was or had been a disciple of Picasso as well as Matisse and others of the Neo- and Post-Impressionists; none the less, in these things, like Van Gogh and Gauguin and even Matisse, she had achieved something that might be called her own—roundness, richness, mood, fantasy, which was purely personal, a clear reflection of her own skill and fancy. And along this line really remarkable things might be expected of her in the future. The critics were almost agreed as to this.

And Ellen, according to Miss Mathews, had taken great encouragement from this and had been concentrating and working at a great rate, when of a sudden, and in the most unexpected way, the whole thing was overcast for her and made rather tasteless and dead by the fact that McKail, her doughty Scotch companion, had only within the last six or eight months begun to weary of her and turn his eyes elsewhere. Or rather, so it was said, there was another girl—Kina Maxa, a Polish dancer, recently arrived in Paris and much talked of for her art. She was young and intense. After creating a stir in the music halls she had been sought out by Ellen who desired to paint her. Diplomatically or from a varietistic point of view this was bad for it brought Kina in contact with McKail who as instantly also desired to paint her, although he

did not say so, then—only subsequently he did paint her many, many times. In short and probably to Ellen's chagrin and despair Kina succeeded in changing his artistic viewpoint and that not a little, causing him during the next few years at least to paint her and others in, if you will believe it, somewhat the mood if not the manner of Ellen. And what could be worse? What was it really, love—or hypnotism—or the hypnotism that is love? The exact truth was that Kina had conceived of a fiery fancy for McKail as he for her. After a few weeks, according to Miss Mathews, there had been secret meetings—a discovery of the same by Ellen Adams and then despair. For at once, after his forthright and almost realistically cruel fashion, McKail was at no pains to conceal this sudden change of heart. In short, after a flat confession of his views he disappeared with Kina and was not heard of for some time. And then only to say that he was in love—and gone no doubt forever. And so there was Ellen, alone and distrait. And my friend Miss Mathews had already evolved the theory that perhaps it was Ellen's success rather than the Polish newcomer's different if not superior charm that caused Keir to change. But that I doubted. His was neither the nature nor capacity that could easily admit, let alone be convicted of, defeat at the hands of a woman. On the other hand, because of ample proof of his domination of Ellen in times past and his bare and highly dogmatic toleration of her flamboyant mood, he was not likely to envy her her success with that. If anything, it

seemed to me, he was more likely to have deplored it for her sake. If he had changed, it was more likely because he was fascinated by another type.

But in as far as I was concerned no direct word from Ellen or McKail at any time. And so eight months more. And then one day a letter from Ellen. It was dated Paris some ten days before and inquired rather smartly as to art conditions in America—who were the principal dealers, how much of an impression the futuristic method had made there, whether I thought an exhibition of her painting to date might not be arranged for her by me. She had done many new things, improved greatly. More, she was thinking of coming back for a time. She was a little fed up on Paris. A line at the bottom added that at present McKail was in the south of France. Nothing more.

I wrote her what I knew of the New York field. It was only fair. The French art revolution had not as yet captured America by any means. It would require time, if anything, to educate America up to this new phase of art. Whereupon seven more months of silence. And then another letter. This was from London. She had left Paris some four months before. In the interim, or since writing me, she had married —an Englishman—and removed to London. McKail—well, McKail had left her, had become interested in another love. To be sure, she had intended to come to America but about that time she had met Mr. Netherby and was now very happy, painting and ar-

ranging an exhibition of her things in London. If I was coming over at any time I must look her and her husband up.

To say that I was astonished is putting it mildly, for I was convinced after seeing her in Paris with McKail that she was not likely to be happy with any one else. There are certain combinations, for a woman at least, which instinctively you know are right. There are certain powerful, sturdy men who take and bind certain sensuous, male-loving women as with hooks of steel. It makes no slightest difference that there are moderate variations in viewpoint or that the woman has certain gifts which the male has not, or the man has certain tendencies which the woman has not or of which she can in nowise approve. It is those very differences, maybe, (and the greater, often the surer the appeal), which bind a given pair. At any rate, in the case of McKail and Ellen, it had been as plain as anything that artistically and emotionally she was his slave. Decidedly she did not copy him as much as she might have under such circumstances, but distinctly and because of his strength and his deep and defiant convictions, and not otherwise, she was moved and sustained in those superior art emotions which now showed in the brilliant canvases which I so much admired. Nor did it make any difference to her that he did not consider them as significant as his own. To be able to do them she needed that substratum of intense and even heavy reality which was of the

very body and mind of McKail. As an artist Ellen rested on McKail as on a rock, and from his heavy but sure physical base took her flight. Besides, no doubt she adored him for what he was, and this gave her the zest for what she was, no more and no less than a spiritual emotion of himself, a flowering out of his convictions in regard to self-expression plus a Neo-Impressionistic French art movement and her own colorful and exotic mind. If my psychologizing is worth anything, this is true.

But now here she was married again, and after Wrynn, Race and McKail. I could truly feel the force of the blow that had stunned her. For now I could recall, as though she might have been brooding concerning them herself, the two bright studios, the one in the Boulevard Rochechouart and the other in the Place Pigalle, the high windows, the differing canvases, the happy-go-lucky arrangements for now a breakfast in the one place, a dinner in the other or in one of the city's colorful restaurants, and with Ellen looking so Frenchy and youthful in her smart walking suits and McKail so sturdy and shepherd-like. Verily, it must be a dark hour that she was enduring, the sprightly Pole who had enticed her love from her hovering as a black fancy over the desolation of her former gay world.

And then, not more than a year or possibly nine months later, came another letter. Things were very bad in England, artistically as well as otherwise. It

was the war, of course. One was called upon to do anything and everything but paint, and yet paint was all she was interested in. Otherwise, things had not changed any since she had written me, but she was coming to America; in fact, would be here within the month. The foreign market and atmosphere had been so completely dissipated by the war that she was going to try living and working in New York. Did I know of a good studio which had any sort of atmosphere or was part of a neighborhood that had? (I recommended Washington Square, of course.) Could I introduce her to any interesting current personalities who might advise as to art here, or rather the exhibition of it? Her husband was not coming now, could not, but would come later. (I thought not a little as to this, for I knew that she had never left McKail willingly.)

And then within the month, she did appear, and I saw a woman not so much physically as spiritually changed from the one I had known in Paris and New York. Interestingly enough now, she was even more in the mode than she had been in Paris—due, I assume, to the absence of McKail who in Paris had argued against any fixiness or teasiness in the matter of dress. And anyhow, here more than there her whole get-up bespoke an effort to make the most of her charms. And I wondered as to that.

Soon thereafter she took a studio on Sixty-fifth Street, one of a number in the building housing the then fa-

mous Healy's all night restaurant that occupied the ground floor, basement and some private suites beneath the studios on the upper floors. As all who know prewar New York will recall, Healy's was a center for actors, artists, musicians, and literary people, to say nothing of bon vivants who kept the taxis in that region clattering between ten at night and four in the morning. The spirited wails of flutes and violins that were to be heard, if faintly, even in the topmost studios of this place, one of which was Ellen's, probably suggested Paris to her. At any rate, here she was and here, as I soon found on visiting her, she had stacked quite all of the best things of her Paris period, to say nothing of a number of others done recently—only, as I could see, not nearly as good—neither so colorful nor so spirited. We went over all of them together, with the result that I told her that all she needed to do was to persevere (perhaps not even that), to get recognition for what she had already accomplished.

One of the difficulties of her present situation, as she now pointed out, was the fact that here as well as in England the Great War was backgrounding all art. To be sure, America was not yet in the war, but the effect was almost the same. In England she had been unable to do anything at all. The one showing she had made had not brought her anything. People were not interested in things artistic. Here in America, things were almost as bad. The normal buyers of art were now buyers of Liberty Loans, and art

critics and art lovers along with painters and poets were being drawn to the front. Such exhibitions as came and went did so without a ripple of interest. Sales were arranged and gone through with, with, however, most of the treasures "covered" and returned eventually to the salesrooms unsold. You couldn't get money for art treasures any more than you could get fame for any but war artists—painters of trench charges and aeroplane onslaughts.

Nevertheless, as I now noticed, Ellen entered briskly enough upon her campaign—first to make a suitable exhibition of her pictures; next, to recapture her interest in America and if possible in life, which was the ill that was actually besetting her. Industriously she visited all the principal art dealers who managed exhibitions, but, as she told me, found them cool. Too many war troubles. It would cost her a pretty penny just to show her pictures for a month, and prices in other ways were soaring. And as she now confessed, she had not married a wealthy man. It had been a "love" match, "and these things, as I knew, were rarely, if ever, connected with money." I wondered as to the "love match" or why marriage at all. For presently she was about with as hectic an art and bohemian group as could be assembled in New York at that time. More, she was drinking, and in a sort of abandon of spiritual misery, as I fancied at times. For occasionally when she was thus chemically fevered, she would give way to comments on the uncertainties of life, and even art. One

started out, as a girl say, with such definite ideas of what might be accomplished, in life or art, but neither ability nor the lack of it or enthusiasm or the lack of it guaranteed one either failure or success. This war now—how thoroughly it had upset or deflected all art values for the time being!

And once she added, in a burst of bitterness, but just once, that there was this trouble of her long and close relationship to McKail. She had fancied, or rather thought she knew, that they were temperamentally as well as affectionally so closely, almost permanently, allied. Yet see! Both—not McKail alone, as she was careful to emphasize—had drifted apart. Yet this, as I knew, was but camouflage on her part. McKail, not she, had drifted. And in so doing had brought about for her a sense of not only confusion but of possible futility, since not only was her youth in the main gone but artistically she had not as yet achieved that secure position which from the beginning had been her dream.

And then one more little thing. I met an English woman who had known both Ellen and McKail in Paris, also her new husband in England. And she was full of a discrediting wonder in connection with this marriage. Why, of all people, Sherard Netherby? A most insignificant and unimportant scribbler and critic who hoped in a rather indifferent way to shine later as possibly a—well she scarcely knew what, maybe a dramatic critic. But full of flamboyant and exotic no-

tions of what it meant to be a real artist! He also had been in Paris and had known McKail, and no doubt at the time as well as now it seemed a great thing to him to succeed McKail and to possess Ellen. But she? Of what had she been thinking? To spite McKail? To seek to drown her misery in the company and arms of such an unstable and mentally unsound creature as Netherby? It was too ridiculous! To be sure he had family. But family,—to her—it was too little. And it could not possibly last. Unquestionably she must be sick of it already, and was no doubt over here now to escape the irritation of this new frying pan.

This criticism tended to illuminate Ellen's current restless and erratic mental and emotional state as I was observing it. None the less, through various acquaintances, letters of introduction and the like, she sought and finally succeeded, after a fashion, in generating a small social if not art interest in herself and the things she was doing. Several critics were invited to her place for tea, and she contrived introductions to others. Sincerely interested, I commandeered three and took them to view her things. Critic-wise, they expressed doubt. She had come back without any final stamp of foreign public approval and she had not made a public exhibition of her things here. It was therefore a matter of time. As I saw it, she would have to make up her mind to wait.

But it was rather by her mood in regard to herself and life than by her art efforts that I was now im-

pressed. Although born here, she seemed now to be out of touch with America, and life, too. And in spite of the fact that she had already accomplished a very great deal artistically, she was unbelievably depressed. In her studio, in so far as I could see, she worked very little. Rather—and this was so unlike her Paris mood —she seemed to be intensely anxious to meet men. Perhaps fundamentally it may have been a keen desire to meet some one man of force or distinction, or both, in the walk of the arts who could again enchant her. (That undying human dream!) But despite all those she met, writers, professional men of various walks, artists, critics, none appeared to affect her. Rather during her stay of over eight months here, there was this feverish search for something, with no art work that I could see being done, with no conviction that she would remain here or that she wanted to remain here, with no suggestion of anything worth while that might be awaiting her in Europe, with no mention even of the English husband. Once, and only once, while looking over some sketches I came across one of a tall, pleasant, and yet very conventional-looking Englishman, the officer type, who appeared to me to suggest some, not too much, culture and refinement. "And who is this?" "Oh, that is Sherard, Mr. Netherby, my husband." "Oh, yes, to be sure." So passed husband—in and out, as it were, an obviously not too interesting subject.

And then finally the following note. Or rather here

is part of the note. "I fear I am permanently weaned from America. I can't stand it any longer and am returning to London. Since my plans are unsettled, I am leaving most of my paintings with Ursula J——. But I have told her that you might wish to select a few that have always interested you. You might as well have them for your walls if you wish. I cannot take them along and hate strangers to have them, although some will have to be stored. I can't even give you a permanent address, but I'll write you." When I tried to reach her by telephone she had already sailed.

Thereafter, six months' silence. Meanwhile, acting on her suggestion I had selected ten of her most interesting pictures and hung them as she wished. Then a note from London. She had quarters there but was going to Sweden for the summer. Again a long silence. Then a letter a year later asking after the paintings and telling me to please look after those that were still in storage here. Also she added that she had resumed her maiden name: Ellen Adams, and gave a new address.

Two years later, another letter. No real news. She was still in London. Were her paintings all right? (They were—all except the storage dues.) Still another year and another letter giving a new address—in Paris —and saying that presently she would have her paintings sent there. But they were not sent. Another friend, some one in Philadelphia, had been asked to take them out of storage and hold them. But mine (some of the best) were never asked for.

In the meantime I had looked up Ursula J——, in whose care Ellen had at first left the major part of her paintings. She was an American illustrator who had studied in Paris at the time Ellen had been there, and knew both McKail and Ellen quite well. At the time Ellen had left I had gone to see her but had not troubled to discuss our mutual friend. She seemed too reticent to invite any confidences. But after this long time and Ellen's continued indifference to her paintings (ten of them in my possession, one hundred and twenty in hers), she seemed more willing to talk. Why had Ellen returned so suddenly to London? Why had she left all her paintings here so long? Why this astonishing indifference to them? What had really become of her?

"Well, don't you really know? Didn't you ever meet Netherby?"

"No."

"You have seen her sketch of him, though."

"Yes."

"Well?"

"I know that, but her indifference to her career, her paintings lying around here! I should think she would want those."

"So would I. They are beautiful and they ought to make her. But they won't. She isn't interested in them or herself any more, and so they won't. It takes belief in oneself as well as one's work to do that and I fear Ellen hasn't that belief any longer. They are mere un-

happy wraiths of her past. They have no one to speak for them."

"But she has a genuine gift for painting. The things that I have are splendid."

"And these that are here with me. But Ellen's through, or until she finds another man like McKail she is. That was a case of genuine love on her part. And she will never replace him. She doesn't want to. And until she wants to and does, she will never paint."

"Oh, nonsense!"

"Not at all. The truth is that art was just a door to happiness for Ellen. She could always paint. She can now, better than ever if she only wanted to. But she won't. Her sole aim is to achieve happiness. And the only way she can do that is to paint for some one she loves. But she can't love and paint unless she can respect her lover mentally and artistically, and the only person whom she had ever really respected and adored artistically is McKail. He was her life, her inspiration, and he is to this day, I think. When he left her, she quit. It wasn't worth while without him, and apparently it never has been since."

"Blew up!" said I.

"Artistically, yes. And yet, Ellen is really a wonderful woman. She is so big and generous and sympathetic. And she can paint. Only I don't believe now that she would ever have painted as much or as well as she did if it hadn't been for McKail. She was mad about him. A friend of ours who was in Paris at the

time McKail left her tells me that she all but lost her mind. She moved in a kind of daze for months. And he said that if it hadn't been for Netherby, who came along about that time and offered her sympathy and care, she might have gone mad. He finally persuaded her to return to England as his wife, and later she left him because she could not forget McKail. She told me so."

"I guessed as much," I said.

And then later—much later—McKail himself—hale, successful, determined, achieving an art exhibit here, selling not a few things and then returning to France. But without Kina Maxa. She had left him. And his pictures now speaking almost exotically of her! Upon my life! I said. Yet in all our conversation scarcely a word about either Ellen or Kina. In short, only a word or two about Ellen—none about Kina. He came to my studio and there were her pictures—a few. And looking up he said, "Oh, Ellen, to be sure. Four of her best. I often wondered where she left them. She should have kept on." But no more. Not another word. No where is she— nothing. I stared. Almost talked to myself.

Only Ellen's departure had taken place almost fifteen years before. And the paintings delivered to me and Ursula J—— are still unclaimed. And no word—nothing—from Ellen Adams Wrynn.

LUCIA

Part I

Her father was a Russian, her mother English. She was born somewhere along the Riviera. Following her birth her mother became an invalid—or at least believed she was—and moved from one health resort to another with the faith of a religious fanatic. But in spite of her travels and contacts with people of various temperaments and morals, as her daughter Lucia once said to me, she remained cold and unsympathetic to life's pleasures, shunning wines and even the mildest of social flirtations. She had no least understanding of the nuances of lovemaking, said her daughter; Mother considered children to be its sole aim and end. Since specialists had told her after the birth of Lucia that she must never have another child, she considered her marital obligations discharged for life, and gave her husband only a sisterly companionship, which, however, she never allowed to interfere with plans for nurturing her own health and that of her child. For she did try to give her daughter every advantage of health and education, exercising eternal vigilance over her physical and moral well-being and engaging the most expensive governesses rather than submit her to the risks and influences of normal school life.

Unfortunately, and as is so often the way in such cases, Lucia resented this close guardianship and, cruelly enough, gave all of her affection to her father, who idolized her. Unable to find happiness with his wife, this particular benedict came and went, constantly driven away from her and back again. He had been a general, so his daughter said, the youngest in the Russian army, but his wife had persuaded him to give up active duty and travel with her. This they were able to do because they both had money of their own, and the world had seemed to offer endless adventure before she developed her unreasonable preoccupation. But one of her strongest convictions was that she could not be well and happy in Russia. Perhaps it was something in the free, barbarically-colored spirit of its people that hurt her English conservatism.

Sometimes, said Lucia, they would spend a few weeks in the summer on the country estate of her husband's family in Russia, but not often,—an enormous wooden house with a great wooden platform and steps disappearing into a lake of gray-green, uncut lawn, with pine forests beyond. Lucia loved this place, she said, and always would. It was one with her own temperament—wild and free. When her mother got heart attacks and headaches and wanted to leave, she would beg to stay on with her father, at least until fall, and so she spent several summers there alone with him and a few old family servants. Always she looked back on these times as the happiest in her life, she said. Love—

so-called sexual love—was never able to duplicate or attain the degree of joy, admiration and understanding which she felt in those days with her father—riding through the forests in the early morning, walking over the rough fields in the long, northern evenings; or curled beside him reading by the fire at night. Back with her mother again at Bad Nauheim or Pau, she would long fiercely for her father, hating herself for being a girl and having to live with her mother and start counting the days, crossing them off the calendar, till Christmas, when always he came with Russian presents and stories of boar hunts and how the old place looked after the first snow, with the peasants' children coasting down the long sloping fields.

Always before he came, though, Lucia and her mother and the current governess—they didn't stay long with such an ungrateful child as herself, she once said—would go to Paris and shop. Her mother, as she said, ordered lovely dark dresses that made her look very sweet but older than she really was. Lucia rebelled at standing for fittings, so her mother bought her hand-embroidered, smocked dresses at Liberty's, white for best and blue for every day. But as for her own choice, she said, she always felt more comfortable in the plain sailor blouses and skirts she got by the dozens in Germany: white, with blue anchors embroidered on them, for summer; and dark blue, with red anchors, for winter. More, unless her mother protested that

friends were coming to lunch or she was invited to spend the day somewhere, she wore them constantly.

But one occasion stood out in her memory which embittered her forever against her mother's taste. She was almost fourteen. It was two days before Christmas and at a hotel in Rome. Her father was expected to arrive on the eight o'clock train, and they were dressing to go to the station to meet him. Her mother had presented her with a new dress that cost 1,000 francs in Paris. It had a round neck and two little bunches of flowers exquisitely embroidered on the front. Suddenly she noticed that the dress emphasized the budding curves of her young figure. The thought of becoming anything but a small edition of the father she so idolized infuriated her. Red with anger at nature and herself, she started to tear off the dress, when her governess coming in tried to stop her. A terrific argument ensued. Lucia was ashamed to tell her real reason for disliking the dress. Her mother, failing to understand, threatened firmly, though tearfully, that she could not go to the station unless she wore the dress. Fortunately just then the telephone bell rang. It was her father's voice. He was downstairs, having made better connections than expected. In a few moments she was in his arms, sobbing away her troubles.

After Christmas that year, her father, so Lucia said, persuaded her mother to accompany him into the African desert. And true to character, as Lucia said of her mother, she insisted on taking along the latest gov-

erness for Lucia, since she considered the child too old to be left unguarded for a moment in a land of scheming Arabs. Although Lucia was really fond of the governess, a pretty, dark Italian of possibly thirty, she hated the idea of her mother trying to make her prudishly sex-conscious. It resulted only in driving her away from one parent and closer to the other, who took life so much more naturally.

One night, after Lucia was put to bed, so she said, her father, within her hearing, suggested a trip through the native quarter of Tunis. The local sheik was being married and there was to be some unusual dancing. But his wife felt too tired to make the effort. He therefore invited the governess. The next day Lucia found her mother weeping in bed and threatening to leave for France at once. She refused to see her husband, who stood outside her door perplexed and miserable. Frankly he told Lucia that he and the governess had come home rather late the night before, and found her mother pacing the room in a hysterical rage. She had insulted the governess, who was now packing her things preparing to leave. He himself was going to take the poor girl to the station and pay her a month's salary. Lucia was to come along with them.

She always remembered, she said, the ride in an old-fashioned motor to the station on the outskirts of the town. It threw such a strong white light on the difficulties of marriage—or the relationship of at least one father to one mother. She sat between her father and the

governess and held a hand of each. The woman was crying softly, and when she got to the station refused to take the extra salary. Father said he would send it to her. On the way back home her father kissed her several times very tenderly, and she was very happy because she knew that in the next few days that would be required to calm her mother's nerves, she would be to him the consolation that he needed. In consequence she felt very grown up and sorry for both of them.

That summer, according to Lucia, they went back to the Russian estate for the last time. It was early in May, 1914. The birches were beginning to turn green and the woods were full of blue wildflowers. But by June her father was already talking of sending her and her mother back to Switzerland or Holland. Always in touch with inner military circles, he knew that talk of war had been growing stronger and when the Archduke was murdered it was a certainty for Russia. At the end of June therefore he put his little family on the train with the promise that he would follow them in a few weeks, as soon as he had settled certain business affairs. But the call of the old military life grew too strong for him. He went back to his regiment and was enthusiastically reinstated as general. His wife, terrified and pessimistic, predicted only ill, whereas Lucia was wildly proud of him. She wrote him every day, crazy little love notes, she said, that afterwards they found among his military orders. His wife wrote only to beg him to come back to them.

After the mad first war week in August they heard nothing of him. Lucia used to run down the mountainside every day from their chalet above St. Gervais, to ask for mail and wait for the morning telegrams to come over the one wire in the town. One hot afternoon the first week in September, at the sight of a tall, powerfully built man in knickers, with a knapsack on his back, toiling up the hill to the chalet, Lucia threw herself headlong down the mountain path. It was her father. He had succeeded in having a dangerous secret mission assigned to himself on condition that he could spend a week with his family. Posing as a trapped tourist, he had made his way through Germany, tramping most of the time and depending on his wits for food. But he had secured the information he was after, and now for four days Lucia was to have the joy of his presence.

When she next saw him it was winter. A telegram from headquarters in Petrograd informed them he was being sent south on sick leave. They went to the Black Sea to meet him. The minute after the train pulled in, they saw him waving gayly to them, but just the same when Lucia's mother saw his face she clutched her hand convulsively. Lucia herself could not believe anything could happen to him. But two days later, she stood beside him while he died. She could not really believe then that death was real, she said, but when she finally did grasp what had happened, she went to a little balcony outside the room and stood there.

Just below under the balcony was a glass enclosure. When she thought about it afterwards she could not say that the idea of suicide was actually in her mind, any more than her mother's sobs and the explanations of the doctors. She only asked to be allowed to stand there, while in her mind, quite far away but real nevertheless, was the noise of shattering glass.

After the first few weeks Lucia discovered, she said, that even grief such as hers does not last in continuous intensity. She was surprised that sometimes now she could think of pleasurable things, even of her future occasionally. But also she determined to preserve her grief, because it was the most precious thing she had. The ragged edges of it she soothed with a sudden belief in Fate, and the long gray stretches of it she tasted and flavored with every tragic book and poem she could find. Outwardly, according to her own account, she was cold and indifferent, really cruel to her mother, considering her very different brand of sorrow a cheap, childish sentimentality. On the other hand her mother did her best to break the mood which Lucia had built around herself, and took her on a tour of all the famous and beautiful places in Italy since that country had not as yet joined the war. But all was colored by the girl's dark mood. Later—too late, she said—she was thankful to her mother for having given her these beautiful settings to her spiritual sorrow, and when tragic events overtook her later in life, she felt she could not suffer with the same concentration and reality that she had felt

after her father's death. It was as if at that time she had burned out some cells of her emotional batteries and never again would she have to respond so vividly to the torture of living.

When a friend of her mother's suggested sending her to boarding school, Lucia leaped at the idea, seeing more freedom for the indulgence of her moods. Her mother, bewildered, protested at first that she could not let her out of her sight, but finally gave in, and October found Lucia unpacking a trunk of regulation uniforms in a very severe Huguenot school on Lake Geneva, housed in a large wooden chalet on the top of a long, mounting field. Lucia, so she said, loved this field immediately, because it reminded her of the uncut lawn in front of the old house in Russia. Also the view down the lake toward Montreux became a symbol of lost, unattainable beauty. Then she would look over at Evian, across the lake, and her mind would jump back of it, up that valley that marches to St. Gervais, and she would vision a man tramping up the hill to a chalet, and then tramping down again.

The grounds of the school were perhaps fifteen acres, including part of the field, a small pine grove and an abandoned vineyard at the end of a long allée. The girls walked up and down this allée in the daytime as much as they liked, but after dark they were supposed to stay on the gravel paths around the house. Almost every twilight, however, Lucia would manage to slip down under the black shadow of arched trees

to the edge of the vineyard. Here was the platform of an old summer house that had been blown away in a storm, together with a view of a mountain peak beyond, and here she would sit and look across the lake at the peak. She dared stay only five or ten minutes, and even then the quick darkness and the whisperings in the trees and vines often frightened her. But when she got back to the lighted school hall and bowed her head for evening prayers, she felt secretly exhilarated, as if she had kept a rendezvous.

The rules and routine of lessons interested her. Whenever they aggravated her, she said, she tried to think she was in an army and must work hard to become a general. Far ahead in some subjects and far behind in others, she found herself, on the whole, a disappointingly average mind in class compositions and exercises. In sports she was a little above normal. She made friends easily, but always avoided gatherings of more than two or three girls as boring, because she had already acquired the habit of acting differently with different people, and a crowd made her feel negative. Her roommate, as she recalled for me in trying to explain her life, was a bright, pretty girl, whom Lucia liked, though she could not understand her. For one thing, she seemed to have a strong moral sense regarding the school rules, while on the other hand she thought nothing of getting letters from boys; even confided to Lucia that two or three had kissed her. Lucia, obeying most of the rules as she said because it seemed

the pleasantest thing to do, thought this strange of her roommate, even evil, but when it came to something that she herself really wanted to do, like running down to the vineyard at dusk, she did not hesitate. But she had never kissed a boy. The thought was far from her mind, although occasionally, she said, she had visualized some tragic, passionate romance for herself in keeping with the somber and fatalistic literature she adored. But she had never really anticipated the details, such details scandalizing some sense of hers, not moral, perhaps, but æsthetic.

Twice a week, according to her, the girls spent the afternoon in making bandages and dressings for the Red Cross. During this time articles and stories about the War were read aloud to them, of course carefully expurgated and purely heroic in appeal. In betweentimes they knitted sweaters and various articles, and as soon as one was finished and wrapped, its maker was allowed to write a little note to the unknown soldier who would open the package. According to herself Lucia wrote the funniest little stilted notes, filled with would-be consoling remarks on Fate and expressions of tenderness that sounded more like some bitter-sweet old maid than a healthy young schoolgirl. Also she quoted passages from the Bible, the Rubaiyat, Oscar Wilde, and what not else, books she had found in her father's home. But she took these notes as a solemn responsibility and always pictured the unknown soldier

reading them the night before his doom. She considered it childish and ridiculous of her roommate to add little crosses for kisses at the end of her effusions.

Nevertheless, she felt an indefinable longing for something that would give and take affection. One rainy November day, therefore, from one of the walks which along with the other girls, and two by two, she was allowed to take down to the village, Lucia brought a stray dog back to her room. To conceal him she tied him under her bed, where he seemed quite content to sleep and at supper she slipped some of her meat and bread into a pocket for him and also gave him water out of her washbowl. And when she got into bed he curled up on top of her feet. He was quite a large dog, a brown, shaggy terrier, and writhed with affection when she patted him. During the night it got very cold and rain blew in over the bed. Lucia pulled the dog under the sheets with her. The next morning the sun was shining. The dog jumped out of bed, refreshed and happy, but unfortunately Lucia could not quiet his yelps and bounds. These brought the sisters who heard, and the dog was compelled to leave. That night though Lucia could not sleep for a long time for thinking of the dog—his homelessness—fate. And she explained to me that she said to herself very darkly and dramatically, of course, I am a tragic person, and no doubt it would be silly for me to have a happy, brown, shaggy dog. Life cannot intend such a thing for me. But I wish he had a good home and I wish I would fall in

love, so I could prove that I am worthy of Fate. (What she meant by being worthy of Fate was hard for her to explain, but principally, as she said, she had an idea that only people who suffer and have strange things happen to them are worthy of being alive.)

It was after her first holidays, after a terrible Christmas with her mother, as she said, who took her to Paris and wanted to do everything but leave her alone with her memories of past Christmases, that a strange thing happened to Lucia. The afternoon following her return to school the sun shone in a heavy, gold mist. There was a warmth in the air that seemed almost ominous for January. At four o'clock the girls were supposed to play hockey, but suddenly Lucia was seized with a desire to see her mountain through this luminous mist. With hockey stick in hand she ran down the allée, through the crackling leaves, to her platform. The lake was covered with low, drifting clouds; above them, the Dent-du-Midi stood up like an iceberg in the ocean. Lucia dropped down on the platform and leaned on her knees. Suddenly she heard a rustle; some one was coming down the allée. She looked and saw two figures, both in the garb of the Huguenot sisterhood. They were walking toward her. She had time to hide, but curiosity kept her looking. One of the figures was Sister Berthe, the music teacher, who lived in the next chalet, but the other . . . Lucia thought she had never seen any one so thin. She looked like a fasting monk Lucia had once seen in a monastery near Ravenna.

The cord knotted around her gray gown swung against her skirt as if there were nothing under it. As they came nearer, Lucia saw that the stranger's face was pale and thin and her eyes very dark. She looked like some illustration out of Baudelaire or Poe. When they reached the end of the path, Sister Berthe spoke. "This is what I wanted to show you," she said. And then Lucia realized that this stranger was going to look at her view. More she felt that this wraithlike being would know at once what it meant. If only Sister Berthe would melt away. . . .

At supper Lucia tried not to look around the room. She heard a girl say: "Queer looking new music teacher." So, she would live in Sister Berthe's cottage, which also served as infirmary and had practice rooms for the girls who took piano lessons. After supper Lucia went down to the edge of the pine grove which hid the music cottage. The lights were lit inside. There was a lamp lighted in one of the practice rooms under the eaves. That must be the cell they had given the new sister. Lucia wondered if they had given her a bed. Of course. One of those iron cots, probably. And yet Lucia could easily imagine that white, emaciated figure sleeping on straw, like a monk.

From the very beginning Lucia realized, so she said, that she would never be able to define the feeling she had for this frail strange sister whose name turned out to be Agatha Thiel. She was Alsatian; had studied music for many years in Germany, but had to give up

a promising career because of threatening tuberculosis. For some years thereafter she had lived in a sanitarium, supported by a brother, an architect in Paris. He, however, had been killed in the first weeks of the war, and after that Agatha wanted to be a nurse. But the doctors told her she must live an absolutely quiet life. A Protestant by birth, her friend Berthe had then persuaded her to join the order of the Huguenot sisters and help her with her teaching in this sheltered spot.

This was as much as Lucia could ever find out about the new sister, or so she said. At that time she thought of writing to her mother for permission to study music, but later decided that would be too much. Dante had never spoken to Beatrice, never even touched her hand. Hopeless adoration had not died with the middle ages . . . the capacity for suffering that made you "worthy of your fate," that was all that mattered. This was Romance and Tragedy that walked before her now, and even smiled with those terribly dark eyes at the child they so often caught staring at her.

On her sixteenth birthday Lucia's mother sent her presents and a large tin of marrons glacés, very difficult to get in those war days. Lucia took the tin over to the music cottage on Sunday, when the girls were allowed to pay calls. She knocked at Sister Agatha's door, but when it opened could not remember what she had planned to say. Instead, as she told me, she merely handed her idol the tin, mumbling something about not liking marrons herself and wondering if Sis-

ter Agatha . . . Yes, Sister Agatha was very fond of marrons, thank you very much. Would she come in and sit down? No, she had to call on some other teachers. And Lucia, trembling with joy and fury at herself, ran to the vineyard and sat there all the rest of the afternoon. If I could only speak to her, she said she thought. But how can I? She is in a seventh circle and I am in a second. She could understand me, but I could never make her see that I understand her. It was, so she said, like listening to a sad, sublime concert. After it is all over you desire to rush up and say something to the artist, but there is nothing you can think of that does not seem insipid and banal.

So the months went by. Lucia was happy because she was suffering pleasurably. Hers, as she later recognized, was an exotic, sensuous and sensitive nature already boiling with its own pent up fires. Almost every evening, as the days grew longer, she now explained, she would manage to pass Sister Berthe and Sister Agatha walking together in the allée. The latter's smile would give her a new interest in her work. She was studying Gothic architecture at the time and reading the literature of that fantastic period—Aucassin and Nicolette; Héloïse and Abélard; the Crusaders. All her free time, therefore, she spent delving into more or less forbidden tales from the library of the town, or else in drawing, of which she had grown passionately fond. Her sketches from life, so she declared, were really worth while. She preferred, however, to draw scenes of lovers, parting

or killing each other. And once she made a very careful copy of the doorway of the cathedral at Moissac, with its hollow-cheeked saints, abnormally long-legged and with their knees crossed, grouped under delicate, straining arches. Sister Agatha, the music teacher, wanted to hang it in the main schoolroom for a while, but Lucia was afraid someone would notice that all the faces were alike. All resembled Sister Agatha.

At the end of the year her mother appeared to take her to Spain for the summer. But she made her mother promise she could come back to the school next term. Sister Agatha was coming back, too. The season in San Sebastian seemed wickedly gay to Lucia, in view of the fact that a war was going on. Still, she was pleased when one afternoon a good-looking man followed her from the beach and inquired most obviously about her at the hotel desk. A few days later he made a formal call on her mother with a letter of introduction from an English friend of hers and asked if he might make a sketch of Lucia. He turned out to be a well-known artist, very polite and well mannered, and because of that, though carefully chaperoned by her mother, Lucia posed for him. He called his sketch "Prima Vera." One day when her mother left them alone for a few moments, Lucia told him she resented this title, as she had already lived and suffered. But he only smiled at her very engagingly and suddenly kissed her on the mouth. "You charming child," she said he said, as she turned away. Half indignant, half pleased

by her first kiss she gazed then walked away uncertain as to what else one did under such circumstances.

There were several young men whom her mother considered presentable enough to introduce to Lucia, but they did not interest her in the slightest, nor did she seem to interest them. She was too thin, and wore her black hair too straight, and talked about such serious things, like Dante or Bernard Shaw—her latest find. Lucia felt at this time that if a man loved her she would not have to talk to him, and if he didn't, there was no use wasting time and energy thinking of things that would interest him. She wondered if the artist were in love with her. If he is, she thought, I will have to tell him that it is hopeless; that I am in love with a monk. But the artist disappeared as politely as he had come, and Lucia was glad when at last it was September.

She insisted on getting back to school a day or two before it officially opened, she said. Her hope was to be able to talk to Sister Agatha before the others arrived. She found her looking as pale as ever, but her smile seemed less sad. She had not yet donned her gray cloth uniform but was wearing a dark red silk dress, very long and knotted about the waist. Lucia thought she looked like the young novices who carried the incense at High Mass. But all she could say to her was silly talk about San Sebastian and how glad she was to get back to school and see the mountains again. The next day they were both in their school uniforms again.

The school year went by, and the summer following Lucia's mother had a nervous breakdown. Whether intelligently or not, as Lucia said of herself at the time, she held the thought that maybe it was an effort on the part of the maternal body, not necessarily the mind, to attract the attention of its strange, indifferent daughter. A meditative, speculative psychologic soul, as you see. At any rate, Lucia felt she had to remain with her instead of returning to school. Besides, now she was almost eighteen and had finished practically all of the advanced courses of the Huguenot school except science and mathematics. Undoubtedly, though, as she said she thought at the time she could go on studying drawing better in Paris. And, Sister Agatha being fixed at the school, she could always return and visit whenever she wanted to. Despite the war her mother's finances stood the strain surprisingly well, the father having left a quite large fortune. So they rented a small house at Versailles, and Lucia was allowed to fit up one room for herself as a studio. Two voluminous black embroidered curtains her father had brought once from Tiflis and the sketch of the cathedral doorway at Moissac—no one here would discover the resemblance to Sister Agatha—were the only decorations. And that November after the armistice she began a course at the Beaux Arts, taking the bus to Paris every morning and returning at four, and so gradually began a new phase of living.

Part II

Paris after the Armistice. A great climax and a great anticlimax. People sat around in cafés wondering what was going to happen, no longer expecting the crash of bombs nor waiting for the casualty lists to be posted. But nothing happened, and they were bored. They were reunited but they were disappointed. It was hard to work now that a tremendous pressure plant somewhere had stopped supplying energy.

At the Beaux Arts also the same spirit prevailed, said Lucia. It came in with the air from the street, with the thoughts and memories of those who had had relatives or lovers in the great War. Most of the instructors had war records and medals, and taught almost mechanically. Art was no longer so terribly important.

But Lucia, so she said to me, wanted it to be. It was so meaningful to her, so beautiful—so sure and great a way to express the deeps of oneself. No ordinary girl, this, as you see. So she threw herself into her studies with the zeal of a young scholarship student whose bread and butter depended on her success. Yet it was three months after she started, and only at the persistent request of her head professor, that her mother finally consented to have her study the nude. The only difference that this made though, as she said to me with a sly revealing smile, was that now she could bring her sketches home and work on them there. She

had already been taking "life" for three months and had made remarkable progress.

From the very first, though, as she also explained at this point, Life had come natural to her—doubtless a reaction against her mother's puritanism. Also she grew to be good friends with several of her daily companions. One or two of the boys asked her out in the evenings, but she could not go because her mother insisted on her getting home on schedule. But she went to luncheon with the boys instead, discussing art or the war, and always steering clear of personal subjects. They hardly expected more of her. She was so young-looking for her age, childishly slim, and wore her hair and her clothes so plainly. The only intimate friendship she formed was with a Russian girl of her own age, but who looked much older and carried on several more or less sophisticated flirtations with pupils and professors alike. Her name was Olga and she lived with her parents, who had managed to escape before the revolution with most of their fortune. Lucia often went to their apartment for lunch, and was happy to be able to talk her beloved Russian. Olga preferred to be considered French, but her parents clung to their traditions and grew very fond of Lucia, particularly Olga's father, a handsome, iron-gray-haired man who soon paid Lucia, so she said, much more than fatherly attention and tried to kiss her whenever they were left alone. More, he often took the girls to exhibitions, and occasionally, with the hard-fought-

for permission of Lucia's mother, took them to a gathering of artists in the evening. Lucia's mother refused to go with them. She was always too nervous or too tired to make the effort. Seeing she could win no real affection from her daughter, she had gone back to her old mania of health cultivation and with the aid of new and very expensive doctors managed to pass the time fairly well—or so it was that Lucia phrased it.

Lucia, as she said, gradually began to resent this eternal supervision by her mother. Here was this young Olga frequently going out with boys, even with those of whom her family disapproved. She would, as Lucia saw, always get one of the students of whom her family approved to call for her and take her to where the other boy was waiting. One of her companions in crime was Henri, pale, thin, aristocratic and poor, really charming if weak. Lucia wished she could have such a good friend as this, someone whom she could have fun with without his wanting to kiss her or pretend to be in love. She preferred the companionship of men, but did not know how to go about getting it. The thought of kissing someone you were not in love with seemed ridiculous—not immoral—she would not have cared about that—but simply pointless and æsthetically shocking. She would, as she thought, wait for the ideal, maddening love, which from reading as well as observing the youth of the world about her she was beginning to understand. Yet curiously enough now, as she afterwards noted,—not at that time, the

attentions and kisses of Olga's father were not as repulsive to her as the attempts of younger men. There was a sort of gallant deviltry about him, as she explained to me that appealed to her. But the companionship she desired with boys of her own age did not seem to come her way.

Finally toward the end of the winter, Olga arranged a birthday party. Lucia was to spend the night with her and Henri was to take them to a big charity ball. For the first time, said Lucia, she dressed herself to look like a grown-up woman. Olga arranged her hair for her, lent her earrings, powder and lipstick. She wore a black evening dress that was really a tea costume, with the sleeves ripped out, but it looked very well on her slim figure. Henri called for them with his brother, a pale youth of sixteen. The four got into a cab, and with much chatter and giggling, drove to the nearest cabaret, where Olga left the brother smiling with a hundred-franc note in his hand as a reward for service, and from there the three continued to the apartment of one René Chalet, Olga's latest conquest.

Chalet was a tall, dark aristocrat of the automobile business. His apartment was small but in excellent taste. Lucia, as she said of herself, was unsophisticated but not stupid. She soon realized therefore that Olga had been there before. It was the first time, she said, she had felt sure that her friend was not a virgin. As a matter of fact, Olga afterwards told her that René was her first real lover, although that night she pretended

to be as blasé as the most skillful cocotte. Lucia was not shocked but a trifle aghast and uncomfortably conscious of her own innocence. She seemed, as she said, so inexperienced and out of it, youthfully speaking. After several champagne cocktails, though, they went to the charity ball and had a very good time. Henri was a good dancer and acted as though he enjoyed Lucia's company, even though she told him that she was afraid she could not love him as much as Olga seemed to love René. He told her that she was beautiful and he was happy just to dance with her. René, too, was surprisingly appreciative of her looks and dancing.

After several bottles of champagne, René said he would like to show them the real night life of Paris. They went to a night club in Montmartre which was then the smartest of rendezvous. It set Lucia's imagination on fire. Obviously all these people here were lovers, but did they all love each other? How could that beautiful little thing love that fat, greasy-looking fool; or that handsome old lady love that silly-looking boy she was kissing. Was love, after all, as important as having a good time? Then she shuddered at the thought of a person with a soul letting such ideas run through her head. She ought to feel sorry for these poor, unromantic puppets. Yet she was having a good time herself. It felt nice, so she said, when Henri held her close, and it wasn't so hard to tango after all when you had had a lot of champagne.

After a dance they came back to the table to find

Olga and René had gone. There was a note scrawled on the menu. "Meet you at home at five." It was now almost four. There was some champagne left and they finished it, lingeringly, between dances. Suddenly Lucia said she felt terribly sad. She wanted to cry. There was nothing in the world for her, really. She would never love anyone the way she had the burning, wraith-like Sister Agatha. She had been mocked by that strange passion. After it so much of all this seemed nothing, nothing, and she sat and brooded concerning it all. . . . When Henri stroked her arm and kissed her shoulder, she did not mind. Who was Henri? What was his significance to her. He only made her sadder. Finally they took a cab to Olga's apartment but there was no one there as yet and they had no key. They waited downstairs until almost six o'clock. But Olga did not come. At last Lucia sent Henri away and walked up five flights of stairs—the little electric elevator would make too much noise. Perhaps Olga had come home before them. On the landing outside the door of the apartment she sat down. It was terribly cold, she explained, but she didn't mind that. She was too wide awake. And now she wished she were back in Switzerland, where maybe she could tell Sister Agatha the way she felt. If she could only see her. . . . She began to shiver from cold and loneliness. Was that a gray shadow above her on the landing? Maybe it was a ghost. If only it was a ghost that would speak and say:

"*Dashinka,* tell Dunya to light the fire; I'll be in as soon as I have seen to the horses."

Finally she said she could stand it no longer. She knocked at the apartment door ever so lightly. A long wait. Then she knocked again. A quiet footstep and the click of the lock. She almost fell in, too exhausted to be surprised when Olga's father took her in his arms. "How pale you are, my child!" he whispered, and carried her in to the little back library where a bed had been made up for her. He started to help her take off her dress. She was too tired to notice what he was doing. When she protested, her dress was already off. He began to kiss her, wildly and quietly, all over her shoulders and back. She struggled, but did not cry out. She fell back on the bed, still fighting him off. Then suddenly, she said, he knelt down and hid his face in her hair, gasping in a funny way as if he were suffering. In a moment he got up, very calmly as if nothing had happened, and kissed her gently and went out. When he had gone she burst into wild, stifled sobs. She was miserable, utterly miserable. Finally she lost consciousness. . . .

When she woke up, it was noon. She lay in bed wondering what had happened. Nothing had really happened, and yet the whole scheme of things seemed different. Olga, her best friend, had a lover, and Olga's father had tried to seduce her. Did he know about Olga? Would he want his daughter's best friend to

have a lover? Was sex something different from love? Would she ever want the one without the other?

After that, because he was so courteous, undemanding and genial Henri and she became very good friends. Without approaching any romantic intimacy themselves, she said, they discussed love and sex and their friends. This was very good for her, as she saw it afterwards. Gradually she acquired confidence in herself, dressed with more care and began to look attractive as young girls go. Young men now noticed her, and she very seldom had lunch alone, although her mother still made too much fuss to make going out in the evenings worth while, except occasionally when she could stay with Olga. Also she began to feel more at ease with men. Even Olga's father no longer frightened her. His attitude was just as it had been before that extraordinary morning—one of easy gallantry—perhaps a little more daring because now Lucia no longer fought off an occasional furtive kiss.

Always, though, as she said, she had been thinking of and planning on a visit to the school on Lake Geneva. The strange, wan, ascetic-looking Agatha was always the lure. Finally, the week after Easter she did leave. Her mother saw her comfortably installed in a non-smoking compartment where she would not be likely to be annoyed by men passengers. Then Lucia said she settled back, quite happy and independent, but with a queer feeling that something was going to happen. After Fontainebleau a tall, gaunt Frenchman

got into the compartment. He asked her if she would mind his smoking, and when she said no, offered her a cigarette. She had only recently begun to smoke, and this stranger made the pastime seem unusually exciting. They talked about all sorts of things, about books and art. He seemed brilliant and deep-natured. The sort of man I might have been able to care for, Lucia said she thought—a, for her years, ridiculous but absolutely sincere reflection. At six they had dinner together, just before the train got to Dijon. There he had to get off. Suddenly, in a perfectly natural voice, he said: "Mademoiselle, you are charming. Why don't you get off and spend the night with me at Dijon? You can wire your friends in Switzerland that you have been delayed a day. Dijon is really an interesting old city. I would like to show it to you." Lucia was shocked, but delightfully so as she said. Then men did think of her as a sophisticated woman and attractive, a great step forward as she saw it. She said she said no, but in such a way that he would not think she did not remotely consider accepting.

At the school she did not go at first to the music cottage. After talking to her old friends and teachers for over an hour she managed to ask casually: "Is Sister Agatha still here?" "Oh, yes, just the same as ever." It was all right then; she had not changed; nothing had changed. She waited until they took their evening stroll. The dead yellow leaves still crackled underfoot in the allée. There they came, two figures,

one of them unbelievably thin in her long, gray robe, a cord knotted around her waist. Suddenly Lucia said she felt weak and ashamed—she who had kissed men and begun to doubt the power of love. Yet they were only pleasantly surprised to see her and told her she was getting to be quite a young lady, and how did she like Paris. She was sorry she looked changed now, she said, and wanted to say: "Don't you see that I am just the same hopeless fool?" Instead she chatted automatically about the Beaux Arts and her mother, and explained that she had to leave the next day. A moment later, at the end of the allée, looking at her view, she realized that there was nothing she could ever do about it; she would never be able to express to anyone this strange thing that had lasted so far for two years.

Soon after she got back to Paris she met Carlos. He was really the first man who paid her serious attention, and she could not help liking him. He was tall, good-looking, a wonderful dancer. His father was Spanish. His mother, a rich American, had divorced her husband and spent her life seeking fun as Lucia's mother sought health. Carlos looked and talked like an American boy. Lucia's mother approved of him and let her go out with him at least once a week. Of course she did not realize that Carlos was Spanish by temperament. Later in the season the two mothers took their children to Biarritz for a month. They would not have opposed a romance between the two or even an elopement. But all Lucia and Carlos thought of, so Lucia

said, was having fun. Although Carlos thought he wanted to marry her, he was quite content to dance around with her, excitingly near the edge of an "affair," as he imagined, but yet not really.

Lucia, as she said, was now rapidly developing a thirst for life and adventure. She was also, at last, delighted by the thought that she need not envy Olga or feel that she was hopelessly innocent and awkward. While not physically changed, Carlos, a thoroughly disillusioned young man, had already told her all sorts of interesting things, trying to seduce her by awakening her curiosity; "he even described various amours to which, he said, I drove him because of my maddening virginity," recited Lucia. Yet she only enjoyed kissing him and dancing with him. In sum they danced so smoothly together that they were often taken for professionals. Yet somehow, in taxis and hallways, even in the pine woods outside of Biarritz, she could not give Carlos more than kisses. Perhaps, as she said, out of her struggles with him she derived a sort of pleasure. But it always made her terribly sad and sometimes then she drank a little more than was good for her and would lose her self-control and burst into tears. Often though when she reached home after a night of gayety, as she explained, her elation suddenly transformed itself into despair and she would lie awake until daylight attempting to think things out. There was no reason for acting the way she did, she argued, and yet not going one step farther.

And yet there was that wavering gray figure, with a cord knotted around its waist, that could not be eliminated.

Thus it went on, according to her, almost all that next winter, almost for a year. She studied very hard at the Beaux Arts, but there was no use denying that art was not the only important thing in life. On the contrary, more and more she awakened to the intrigues and romances of people around her. After all, as Olga used to say, the war was over; it was up to the young people to profit by the death of stuffy old principles and get more out of life than their mothers who were disillusioned when it was too late to enjoy themselves. Lucia said she now felt this deeply. She had even a horror of being thought narrow and prudish like her mother. In the spirit of her day—so strangely different from the period that had immediately preceded it, she would rather have people think she was a prostitute than a virgin. She even told Olga that she was having an affair with Carlos. Yet every time she was alone with him, it was the same old story. He would take her home, the inevitable struggle in the hall, then the rest of the night spent in thinking. And he, if he was not too tired, would see if Florence or Collette were at home—or so he said.

Yet all this time, according to Lucia, she was slowly but surely acquiring sophistication and poise. She longed for life so; did so wish to know which was the fullest and surest way. And, too, as she added, at least

some people were beginning to wonder just what her morals were—a tribute, as she saw it! Also, between evenings with Carlos she had several flirtations but did not come any nearer to succumbing. All told though, as she said, she had a very good time, though she never felt quite happy. Mainly she enjoyed feeling that her heart was desperately looking backward and failed to find any new emotions as strong as the old.

But the following summer she decided on a new course. Here she was, almost twenty. She wanted experience and emotion. There was no use waiting for real love. She had had that—the perfect harmony and companionship with her father; the strange exaltation induced by Sister Agatha. Now she wanted the experience of physical love, even though she could not have it with a spiritual or æsthetic side. When she danced and drank and flirted she wanted it. But all that over, she wanted to test her own spirituality. Perhaps some day experience would satisfy her and show her she had been wasting her time thinking about the soul?

Well, there was Carlos, but he, as she decided, was too nice or trivial to experiment with. He would take it seriously. Perhaps she would find herself drifting into marriage with him. And that was the last thing, as she now explained to me, that she wanted. Marriage! It was ridiculous—the death of freedom unless an enormous love repaid one for its limitations. Rather, and particularly at this time, it was her mood that she must

keep her independence and a level head. To that end therefore there was Olga's father, who still hovered around. But might not that make things awkward with Olga? Apart from him there were other men, of course, who appealed to her in various ways but not enough to make her decide. Finally, there was a young and handsome doctor to whom she went to have a tooth extracted. He gave her gas, and when she was coming back to consciousness, she said, he sat beside her in the darkened rest room and stroked her hair. When he asked her how she felt, she said, "Oh, it was a wonderful feeling, just to stop struggling and forget everything." He looked at her a trifle surprised. "I hope Mademoiselle will find that sensation a little later in life under more pleasant circumstances," he commented and with an enigmatic smile. Suddenly she said she felt that maybe this man would do. "I know what you mean," she said, trying to sound very casual. "I have had a lover, but I am looking for another one." Now he looked even more surprised, and asked if he might take her home in a taxi, but she had to tell him that her mother was coming for her. She gave him her telephone number, and for several days she lived in anxious expectation. Should she decide on this man? Where would they go? What would she wear? He was a doctor, and would know what to do. Besides, Olga could always be consulted. But he never telephoned. That caused her to fall to speculating most uncomfortably. Had she made a mistake in mentioning

that she had had a lover? But if she had admitted that she was a virgin, as she argued, men were so afraid of being taken seriously. Olga had told her that. And if they wanted to be taken seriously, they expected a lot of sentimentality and that, after Agatha, she was not prepared to give.

But soon after that Henri, still a good friend, took her to call on a comparatively old man who lived in an enormous attic on top of Montmartre. He was an inventor. The room as she described it to me was filled with funny little models cut out of cigar boxes—machines principally. Worse or better he was a big, shaggy-looking man with stormy gray eyes and an impatient voice. Henri had confided to her that he had a terrible reputation with women. All his life he had seemed a magnet for them and that interested her. Besides, once she saw him, the boreal or viking character of his body as well as the wonder of his eyes fascinated her—young as she was—and however great the difference in their ages she decided then and there that he was marvelous—youthful in spirit, wise, gay, attractive, a kind of shaggy god left over from an older day. And beside him—near him how lovely and exciting would be her beauty. She thought all this and more, she said, —on sight! Over a covered divan in one end of the barnlike room was a striking drawing of a naked woman, almost indecent, as she thought at the time, except that it was so well done. There were other people there for tea. Yet her host paid no attention to Lucia un-

til she chanced to admire the picture. Then at once, she said, he started to talk to her with easy flattering familiarity, praising her taste and asking if he might see her own art work sometime. She promised. When she left he asked her to come again, saying he was always at home in the afternoons, doing all of his serious work at night.

This man as Lucia said fascinated her. Contrasted with all, including Agatha and her father, he seemed important, even beautiful. Besides Henri had told her that he was really a genius—any day he might become world-famous through his inventions. Lucia therefore gave him serious thought. For here now was a man who attracted her physically; who was over fifty, experienced with women and intriguing mentally. True, to him she would be just another woman; but, also, there would be no danger of complications or entangling sentimentalities—no marriage. She was sure she could extract happiness from this strange contrast and decided that she would call on him the next week.

But it was four weeks later before she achieved sufficient courage to ring the doorbell of "D. Sarvasti, Inventor." It was four o'clock of a gloomy November afternoon.

Part III

Usually, as Lucia told me, she took a taxi at four after her last class at the Beaux Arts and got out at the foot of Montmartre. Then she would walk up the winding

street to the inventor's study. Even if it was raining she did not want him to know that she had spent the 6 or 7 francs on the taxi ride, because, as she had discovered at first, he was very poor and her situation was the reverse—so she felt ashamed. Actually, as she insisted, she had never come in such close personal contact with poverty before and especially where she was so vividly interested by one who was so poor. It was a discovery as well as a thrilling sorrow to find out that so great a person could often go without food for lack of five francs, in short, live on small, uncertain sums and great hopes.

This therefore was a vastly greater experience than what she had found that gloomy November afternoon when she called for the first time. Yet when she thought back on the actual hymeneal hour, as she told me, she felt only disappointment. Maybe, as she said, it was because she had already been seduced, so to speak, by books, by art, by Carlos, by Olga's father, by the man who was going to Dijon, even by the undemanding gentleness of Henri, by her passion for Agatha. At any rate, and however, and as young and inexperienced as she was, there had not been so much left for Daniel Sarvasti. Not certainly as much as he deserved. For the truth was that despite his æsthetic fire he was terribly old and tired and desperate about life, yet, as she said, tormentingly hopeful about himself. Although he was in his middle fifties, he was at least sixty in every other respect except that of self-confidence. His faith in his

creative power and in the eventual success of his inventions was the only thing that burned in him; that and sometimes the pain of hunger. At times, of course, he had made various and even considerable sums of money, but as soon as he had any money he poured it into the perfecting of expensive models of his ideas. And so far only one of these had reached the stage of commercial production. At that, a rival inventor had to buy his patent in order to perfect a new type of turbine engine. This rival offered to take Sarvasti into partnership for the manufacture of this machine. But Sarvasti could not submit to the compromises of business; as a partner he was impossible and was eventually paid off with sufficient cash, as he thought at the time, to let him live in the realm of creation, practical or impractical, for the rest of his life. More, he had bought this old house where he lived and fixed the top floor into an enormous attic workroom. Yet in this he had finally to live most of the time, and worse, rent the rest of the rooms, for he had nothing else to live on. But as he told Lucia, night was the only time when the wheels of his mind whirled incessantly. Then and then only he must hammer and saw at his little pieces of wood. Consequently, the only lodgers he could keep were queer people like himself, workers by night; watchmen, professional dancers, dope peddlers. Even the supply of these was occasionally exhausted. Roomers came and went without his knowing and so without paying. Finally, in an at-

tempt to tide him over a suicidal mood, which, to her inexperienced astonishment one day developed in him, Lucia herself, with the aid of Henri, rented two of his rooms and Daniel never knew the difference, except that then he was able to invite Lucia to dinner and once even to take her to the opera!

And so Lucia, who had chosen Daniel as the easiest source of experience of the kind she was seeking, found herself swept into an alarmingly different and dangerous situation. For soon, of course, it appeared that Daniel's affairs with women were mostly things of the past. There were girls, of the "quartier" and others, who came over to cheer him up when he got too desperate, but the same did not necessarily imply more than a liberal camaraderie. And yet because of the dramatic and sympathetic fascination he had and strangely enough continued to have she now found herself playing an important part in a new kind of Bohemian drama.

For how different this was from the pseudo art life that centered around the young people of the Beaux Arts. For here was a group of men who, while not primarily artists, were workers of one kind and another and all preyed upon by some dream of achievement and yet all too poor to enjoy creative idleness. Sarvasti himself, as she often said, never really found mental peace, though he slept all morning and wasted most of the afternoons with friends or with Lucia. To him, or so she said he said, she was like a visitor from

another sphere, with her freshness and her pretty clothes and her unsuppressible curiosity. And she extracted great joy from seeming just that to him—and dispelling in part at least the depressive need and sense of approaching age that so oppressed him. "I wanted to appear an angel of light to him," she once said to me. "And so I really think I appeared, inexperienced and self-interested and almost wholly selfish though I may have been."

Daniel took an almost impish pleasure, so she said, in surprising her with all sorts of tales, heavily realistic most of them but all still charged with an Arabian charm most fascinating to her. He had led such a varied and eager life, too long and too varied to picture here, but full of many real or imaginary or exaggerated adventures. From the amorous Carlos and others she had hitherto only heard idealized details of life, but now Sarvasti's were different—realistic. Yet charming though she was, and I can attest, and physically most alluring, his interest in her was largely platonic. The truth was, of course, that long before her coming he had worn himself out physically. Hence Lucia learned very little about sex from actual experience, and was disappointed. On the other hand, there was an attitude of age-old sophistication in Sarvasti, as she said, a trace perhaps of Greek degeneracy that had been left two thousand years ago in the soil of his native Crete and which gave her a new perspective. He loved to dress and undress her, as she said, almost as though she were

a child, at the same time making believe that they were ancient Cretans at a feast! They would have wine and cheap little cakes and then allow their imaginations to run wild. Sometimes Daniel wanted to play at love-making in rather roundabout ways, but strangely enough, Lucia, with all her curiosity and emotional capacity, could not respond to desire that was not blind and unpremeditated. Mentally she was willing to accept it, but her young blood was stronger than her mind and rebelled against anything not of its own temperature. Daniel, as she explained, felt this. He was by no means insensitive and in consequence was almost always content to admire her youth of mind and body, drinking from her voice and the sight of her what had been drained out of his own spirit.

As the winter went on, though, and the difficulties of this situation increased, or rather as the novelty faded, Lucia said that she began to realize that sooner or later she would have to get out of this. It could lead to no enduring union and yet, as she also said, she did not trouble to build up any defense against the growing demands of her strange lover. He was too interesting and colorful. Besides, as she argued, or said that she did, he needed her so much more than she needed anything that it seemed unbelievably cruel to resist or deny him. Life for all his great nature and dreams had repaid him with so little. And for all his age he still desired so much—and so youthfully. And she sensed that, too. Yet also, as she admitted, it was not unselfish-

ness wholly that kept her trying to help him, but rather the weakness of her naturally sensitive nature, which was always responsive to the lacks as well as the weaknesses of others. For did she not have youth, and beauty and wealth in plenty and need she be so saving so soon? She did not. Besides, as she said, she could not help seeing his point of view, sensing the tragedy of his too futile struggle against age and poverty. And as opposed to this she had no point of view of her own as yet, only an eagerness to get something out of life as quickly as possible. And this plus an inborn and apparently inescapable taste for the tragic kept her sympathetic and so in attendance on him. In a sense, also, as she once explained to me afterwards, here was an ideal experience, from the angle of the "æsthetics of life," if one may use such a phrase. That is, here was a picture of sorrow as well as something more—genius in distress. And here, in her was beauty, its anodyne. And the combination was not only poetically dramatic but memorable as beauty, or so it seemed to her. Hence æsthetic. And so into her mind sprang the truth that a picture or story or piece of life, however tragic, even sordid, is not necessarily lowered but rather enhanced in art value by such a relationship as this—given a special kind of form or dignity, appealing and even grand. And with that I agree. And yet here again, as she said, something stronger than her mind rebelled.

However it was not until one evening in the late

spring that Lucia even suggested straining these bonds of intimacy. They were walking in the Bois at the time. Lucia was officially spending the night with Olga. Suddenly and in a quite impish mood and more to see the effect on him than anything else, as she explained—sadism, you see, she found the courage to tell him she was going away for the summer. "My mother has found a very cheap pension in Bayonne," she explained. (Her mother had really engaged a suite at a hotel in Biarritz.) But she never wanted him to know of her comfortable station in life because she was proud of being valuable to him merely because of herself. Before the words were out of her mouth, he turned on her. "What? Are you going to abandon me? And just now when I am beginning to find life again? When you first came to my workroom I was hardly interested in you. I was poor but not really miserable; resigned only because then I had not met you and never expected to meet your like. But then you chose to come, to show me your soul, your young girl's soul, and give me new life, like a sudden breeze. I did not want to hurt you. I have always respected your funny ideas. I even begged you to go away before you aroused a painful thing like love in the heart of a half-dead old man." (Alas, this was true, as she said, but it had merely thrilled her at the time with a sense of the dramatic.) "But you stayed," he went on, striking furiously at the bushes with his cane, "and twined your soft, silly little arms around my neck until now I am

caught in your sweetness, like a fly in honey. And now you think you have given me enough and want to go and leave me to crawl like a fly with its wings broken!"

He always talked like this, she said, beautifully, tensely, gloriously, whenever he grew emotional. It affected her emotionally, and deeply. As he spoke, she said, the scene widened, the miseries, the intense, bitter needs of life—all life became so vivid. And Lucia, as she also said, could then feel herself as two separate halves, or beings. And thinking—each half—thinking: He ought to be a writer and then maybe he wouldn't be so painfully unsuccessful—and with the other half, struggling with real tears and saying: "Why, Daniello, how can you talk that way? You know that I love you. You know it." (It was not the first time he had forced her to exaggerate.) "I am not going away for good, only for two or three months; my whole life is being with you and helping you just as you help me." (He was always interested in her sketches, she said, and she had really grave respect for his inventions and had always tried her hardest to think up intelligent questions to ask about them.)

"I have given you all my soul and strength," he went on, she said. "I have not thought of another woman. I have given you all the tenderness of a life full of experience and love. But how can you appreciate that, you a restless little child? What can you feel? What have you experienced?"

At this Lucia said she felt hopelessly incapable of answering as well as hopelessly like a cheat since, ultimately, as she knew, she would leave him. Yet to soothe him for the time she said. "But, Daniello, darling lover, I tell you, only for a little while. . . ."

"If you really loved me, nothing in the world would make you leave Paris even for a month when you know I need you so much," she said he said.

"Then I won't go, dearest Dano; I won't go," she said she exclaimed, for his emotion rang too real. She could not bear to see him suffer so, as it made her too uncomfortable, although as she also well knew if she did not end it then, they would have to go over it all again a little later. Just the same, and regardless of all this, she made him stop walking and threw her arms around him—"silly little arms," as she afterwards said to me, "hanging on to something that was bound to sink."

Two weeks later, though, she could not supply her mother with any more excuses for not packing and so had to take the matter up again. Besides, it was almost six months since she had had any just plain, silly, happy girlish fun. Daniel had made her see life too seriously. She could not deny that a desire had been growing in her to get away from that one powerful personality, rhapsodic though it might be, and indulge her own little whims and moods once more. "With him," she once said to me, "you always had to play second violin, perhaps because he was a genius in per-

sonality if nothing else, and yet . . ." The only way she could do it, as she finally decided, would be to stage a scene, and get emotionally wrought up before he had time to be. In regard to this as she also said to me: "It is a shame that people can make you lie to them so, isn't it?" "Yes," I said, "it is."

But here is the way she described the parting scene.

It was a bright summer morning. All her plans and dreams for her new days had been thought out, but apart from him. And there in his presence—and because he chanced to be whistling cheerily as he opened his door to greet her: "Dano, darling, I have something terrible to tell you! Mother almost started another nervous breakdown last night, and the doctor says I have to take her away, right away, to-morrow. I told her I couldn't possibly leave Paris, and she threw the most awful fit of hysterics. I told her very well, I would take her to that pension in Bayonne and then come right back, and if she doesn't give me any money to live on here, I'll get a job . . ." She stopped for breath, she said, just as Daniel stopped whistling and stood glowering. But before he had time to speak, she went on: "Of course, it will just kill me to leave you, even for a few days, dear. Oh, what will I do?" And then she threw her arms around his neck, as he so loved her to do, because as she said she knew, it made her seem so small and helpless to him. And so sure enough, she forced him to soothe her instead of starting a scene himself.

"You can come back in a few days, precious child," he consoled eventually, "and live here with me." "And then," she added, "he tenderly carried me over to the couch and kissed my hair. Only suddenly, then, I started sobbing, real sobs, not because I did not want to leave him, but because I realized I did."

From Bayonne later, of course, she wrote to him that her mother was worse and that she could not come back yet. He was to write her care of the post office in Bayonne. Her mother had given her a baby Renault, so she could run over from Biarritz quite easily and get her letters. And what strange letters his were, she said, written in an almost illegible hand, short, impetuous, sometimes adoring, sometimes insulting, like Daniello himself.

Yet, as she said, it was fun going out again, dressing up and dancing. But, and although she no longer had a hard time interesting men, still it did not occur to her then, as she said, to start any serious affairs, since, as she most definitely insisted, she still considered herself Daniello's, even though she was taking a vacation from him.

But one day in the beginning of August following, she received a letter from him, only two lines, which said: "It is better to cut quickly, like a surgeon performing an operation. Good-by."

It swept over her then, as she said, and most painfully, that she was selfish, disgusting, not to appreciate the love of a real person, a creator, one who was suffer-

ing while she danced. Besides, as she added, he was ending it all,—not she. What now of her art and her soul? Did she not have either after all? To save her own soul, as she phrased it to me, she this time played a trick on her mother. She left a note on her bureau saying that Olga had wired her that she was very ill, and took the night train to Paris.

When she got to Daniello's workroom, she found Rita, one of the girls of the quartier she had met there before. And for a moment, as she said, she was almost relieved. For, maybe this meant that he was really through with her. But at sight of her Daniel almost exploded with joy, taking for granted that she had come to stay and insisting that Rita and his friend Mario, who had also dropped in a little while before, should join them in a champagne supper to celebrate her return. And to make it worse, during the course of the evening both Rita and Mario took her aside and begged her to stand by Daniel. He was really not as well off as he seemed—had been utterly miserable and distrait during her absence—never so bad in all their knowledge of him. To be sure they had done all they could to encourage him, given him a little money and the like, but he no longer seemed able to work and had become alarmingly gloomy. It also developed later, she said, that just before her coming Sarvasti had sold his overcoat and so had a pocketful of francs, hence the suggestion of a supper. But now Lucia gave all the money she had with her to Mario so that he would pay

for the supper. And then they all persuaded Daniel to keep his money for the next party.

And decidedly, as she said, an enormous change did take place in him that evening. She could see as well as feel it. He was so much stronger and gayer than when she had arrived. Later, in his high, dark workroom when they were alone together he paced up and down, talking of the future, how they would live and work together and both succeed and never part!

And to carry this out, she said, the next day she fixed things up with Olga and borrowed some money. Also Daniel himself suddenly succeeded in renting another room in his house that had been vacant for a long time. Following that there were more parties, foursomes and twosomes, carefree suppers in the big open square looking down on Paris. At the end of a week, though, the situation having been saved, as she reasoned, she felt that she could go back to Biarritz for two more weeks and get her mother to come home for good. She was, as she now decided, and for once and all, going to stick by the serious side of her nature as well as by Daniello. For was he not a truly tremendous and interesting character—to her at least? Besides, with him near her she could really concentrate on painting, which, so she told herself, was what she truly wished. In this instance, as she said, Daniello proved most patient about her leaving because perhaps he now felt sure of her.

And so again it was the end of summer. Lucia went

back to the Beaux Arts, but now only for a two-hour morning class. This left her all afternoon to work in Daniel's room. There, from odd studies taken at the Louvre, she painted. Life, as she now tried to tell herself, was only worth while when one concentrated on something and was not afraid of suffering. She had, as she now tried to tell herself, she said, been right in the first place there in the Huguenot school. And in order to confirm her feeling as to this she wrote a long letter to Sister Agatha, trying to describe to her her state of mind . . . and then tore it up. For, as she argued nervously, Agatha hadn't even seen her for over a year. And what would she think of or care about her present state of mind, since she, Lucia, could not explain all? Anyway, as she said of herself at the time, she was proud of herself for having written it all out, or nearly all.

But one afternoon just before Christmas she was sketching a statue in the Louvre and people came and stood around watching. This was always a nuisance, and more especially since that afternoon a man, a stranger, yet whose appearance was interesting to her, kept walking through the room. He had not stopped or stared, just walked slowly by. Finally, she said, the crowd having gone for a time, she looked up at him. He was tall and dark, but obviously not a Frenchman. His shoulders were very broad and his clothes had a rough English look. He looked at her and smiled, quickly and spontaneously, and then walked on. There

is a type of man I know absolutely nothing about, thought Lucia; a nice, clean-cut kind, maybe an American. I wonder if I would like him. She watched him turn down the stairs.

Three days later while working in the same place who should walk by but her Englishman. She looked up and caught his eye. He smiled just a little, and Lucia, faithless to her duty, as she admitted, smiled back. It seemed perfectly natural to do so. "Do you mind my saying hello, Mademoiselle . . . *Français pas bon,*" he added, apologetically. "No, I get tired working," she answered, stretching her arms and settling back in her chair. "You know," she said he began, and at once, "I might as well tell you I have been here every day since I first saw you here hoping you would come back. And you even speak English! What luck!" His voice, according to her, was rich and very masculine, not ingratiating, but commanding. He was Canadian and in Paris on business for a bank. Was there any way, he asked, that he could present his credentials to her family? Could he call at her home? Would her family come to dinner and the theater with him? Lucia answered all his questions good-humoredly, thinking: how little he realizes what a bad girl I am. She said her mother was an invalid and didn't go out much. Finally she found herself promising to have lunch with him next day.

But, as she said to me, and this rather enthusiastically for so idealistic a person, as I thought at the time,

he was absolutely different from all the other men she had known—much more simple in a way, and yet harder to refuse, because in the beginning he expected so much less than most Europeans. He was so boyishly delighted when she said he could come to Versailles and call for her the following Saturday night. If I recall aright, she only reflected one evening about this step. And yet she said she asked herself—and this most painfully at the time—was she drifting back into a worthless life of pleasure again? Could she? No, of course not! Frank Stafford was only going to be in Paris another week—there was no serious question of any kind involved; just a few moments of fun and excitement, maybe, to make her more patient with Daniel's moods afterwards.

And Stafford impressed, of course, with the neat dignity of the house at Versailles and with her mother to whom Lucia introduced him and who fortunately approved of Anglo-Saxons and chatted with him amiably while Lucia was prinking. It was the first time in two months, she said, that she had worn evening clothes, and besides dinner, the theater and the most expensive night club in Paris, to say nothing of champagne, kept them in high spirits. Later Stafford announced it was the first romantic evening he had spent in Paris. On the way home in the taxi he kissed her, not sensually as much as enthusiastically, as she explained, albeit a little sheepishly.

After that came cards and letters from him from

Budapest and Rome. He had fallen in love with her, he said; the first woman who had ever made him feel that way. He was not going to sail from Hamburg, after all, as he had planned, but instead was arranging to come back to Paris for two more weeks.

And by then, although Lucia as she said had determined to make Daniello and her work all her life, for at least another year, still when this message arrived, and later Sir Frank himself, she could not resist going out with him. Dinner, theater, night clubs. And Sir Frank seeming more and more good-looking and good-humored and this and that than ever. What would you? And now he told her he was sure he could not live without her. More romantic still that he proposed to stay over until she would marry him and they could go back to Canada together. He was sure he could convince her as well as her mother who would want to know that he was good enough for her and able to make her comfortable.

The honesty of his desires—or so she insisted—touched her, and when his arm was around her, strong and yet not demanding like his voice, she wanted him suddenly in a way she had never wanted any man before. Up to this time, as she saw it now, she had wanted life, excitement, some kind of mental as well as physical satisfaction. But now and thus suddenly and most unreasonably as she saw it at times, she wanted only this Frank Stafford and none other. She even amazed him, if not herself, by giving herself to

him before he realized what he or she was doing, and that in the little entrance hall where she used to struggle with Carlos. Afterwards, as she said, he appeared to be terribly ashamed of himself as though he had allowed himself and her to fall into a great and even shameful error and so begged her to forgive him. "Of course, you will marry me now, darling," he kept saying over and over. But to his astonishment as she also said, she told him quite calmly that she had a lover and because of that and his views as well as hers, which would apparently clash with his, she if not he was destined to be unhappy all her life. But then, as she said, he was unwilling to listen to her that night or any time. She was not thinking right—seeing life right—she was too young, impetuous, inexperienced really. They would talk it over to-morrow in his room at the hotel.

But it was at this point in her curious tale that Lucia announced to me that then and there for the first time she discovered that she had really never had a lover before. For Frank was not as simple as he had seemed at first. By no means. He had had, as he admitted to her about this time, many affairs with women. In fact, only the week before in Budapest he had tried, with the aid of another girl, to make himself forget Lucia. But she being absolutely different from any other woman he had known he could not, no, no. Let the past have been what it might, his or hers, he was going to marry her and they would forget every-

thing that had happened to them in the past—for they could, *being different.* In connection with all this, though—or so she explained—there was a really fine directness and strength about him that caused her to half believe that all could be as he said. Besides, and despite Sarvasti, physical love was not necessarily as disappointing as she had concluded. On the contrary, it could leave you with a feeling that was almost spiritual. Yes, she would come to his hotel the next day, but not till after six. She had not seen Sarvasti for two days.

That next afternoon, as she confessed, she tried to avoid Daniel's kiss. More—and with a lack of conscience that scared her, as she said—she began to wonder if Daniello had *ever been* like Frank. "Of course," as she added to me, "judging from his stories . . . But I don't think anyone else could be like Frank."

And so began the struggle between youth and age, strength and weakness, which, as anyone might judge, could have but one ending.

Meanwhile, although neither Frank nor Daniel knew each other's names, Lucia told Frank there was a lover she could not give up, and Daniel began to suspect that there was another man in Lucia's life. Her physical indifference to him, as he now proclaimed, proved it. For as hard as she tried to conceal it, at this time she was, as he said, not only evasive but actively forbidding, and that he would not endure. More—and this either in spite of her protests or because of her en-

couragement—Frank had already made up his mind to stay in Paris and fight for her. He was, as she said, a most determined person, and she could not resist going to him two or three times a week, although betimes she was also telling herself that it could not last, he would get tired of her and then she could go back to her serious relations with Daniel. More, as she insisted, although I doubt it, it was impossible not to be tempted by Frank's talk of marriage. Aside from the fact that life in Montreal, where he was manager of a branch bank, would be new and refreshing, what a relief it would be not to have to lie any more, or think up excuses for coming home late, or placate a nervous, overaffectionate mother on one hand and an unreasonable, impetuous lover on the other.

Toward the end of February, as she found, though, and this because while enthusing so over Frank she was still troubling over Sarvasti, the situation began to get unbearably complicated. Frank could not, or would not, keep his bank waiting any longer. Indeed, as he announced most conclusively and as though he could truly direct her, she was going to *marry* him, and at once. More, he had decided to, and finally did, take passage, a double cabin, for the sixteenth of March. Also, as he announced, she was coming with him. But there was still Daniello. And as if by some strange intuition Daniello now began to be morose and demanding. If Lucia really loved him, why couldn't she leave her mother and come to live with him? Would it cost her

any more? And besides, couldn't she start working for money? Didn't everybody recognize her talent? And had she more to do than give a few teas and an exhibition to get started? Of course not! And of course if she thought marriage was important—she had said that her mother was troubling about her not getting married—why, they could even get married just to satisfy her mother. Or was she really trying to run away from him, since so often these days she was letting things interfere with their afternoons together? Didn't she really appreciate their relationship or was she, after all, just a superficial little English girl? This, as Lucia said to me in telling of it, was probably the worst Daniel could have said to her about anyone, let alone herself, English—a superficial little English girl. And when she prided herself on being Russian and mental. But Daniello had a violent Latin antipathy to anything Anglo-Saxon, as she knew. And Lucia, too, hated the English side of herself, because, as she said, she adored her Russian father and it stung her to be called English. And this in spite of her mother and Frank and some English literary adorations, as she added—Swinburne, for instance, and Oscar Wilde and Dowson and Shelley.

As she once explained to me in telling all this, she thought much over the situation, till thinking could do no more good. Only, as she now decided, she did not love Daniel, that was certain. And she was drawn immensely to Frank. At the same time, as she still

insisted, Sarvasti had a tremendous hold over her æsthetic as well as philosophic imagination and by some trick of his cosmos caused her to feel that he dignified her by his love and consideration as none other could, not even Frank! In other words, he, as she once said to me, fitted into her idea of herself as a person. On the other hand, although she did not love Frank, except maybe physically—and there was no denying that—still the life he now offered seemed exhilaratingly different—Canada, America, a new world. But, and on the other hand again stood the fact that she scarcely had the heart to leave Daniel. He was so old, pathetic, helpless and needed her so very, very much—mentally, emotionally, artistically. And yet, as she also naïvely declared, she was too selfish to give up Frank. Had it been possible, I would have kept them both, she once reminiscently announced. "Varietist! Bigamist!" I promptly announced.

But now hearken! Two nights before Frank was to sail, she suddenly realized that she could not let him go without her. He had grown very bitter. He was sorry he had ever had an affair with her now that she would not marry him. After all, as he desperately and angrily announced, she had no sincere emotions. Pooh, in what way was she better than any woman of the streets? How? Never again, never did he want to see her, not even before he sailed. Yet early that morning, as the sun started coming into her bedroom, or so she said, she made up her mind. She could scarcely wait till

nine o'clock to take a taxi to the workroom. All the way there she kept thinking: Daniello was right a year ago—cut quickly! It had to be done sometime, and now while something was pulling her in the other direction was the time.

And yet, as she now found, and although she now told him the whole truth, Daniel was not nearly as violent as she had expected. On the contrary, and that quite calmly, he now merely accused her of marrying for money, of having no soul or appreciation anyway. Why not go? It was best, certainly; certainly it was best. Besides, had he not expected this for the last few months? Well, he would be disappointed in her as with everything else in life, but what of it? Of course, it would change his whole life. He could not stay in Paris without her. But, oh, what a fool he to have counted on a deceitful child! But what should fools expect? Pah! And so that was over. For, as she said, as her mood stood at the time, there was nothing she could say or do. It was too late to protest that she was not marrying for money, and it would be too cruel to point out the fact that he had never really given her any kind of happiness. Besides, as she said, she still felt profoundly indebted to him for what he had given her of life and knowledge and emotion. And not only that, but this bitter, despairing attitude of his was much harder to answer than any unreasonable outburst could have been. So for a time, she said, she stood there, absolutely silent, then turned and walked out. Only in

doing so, it was like running away from the sight of a suffering animal without doing anything. "Oh, how I hated myself," she said, "but then it was too late to go back."

And then, as a contrast, she decided to surprise her Frank and make him as happy as it was now possible to make him. Since it was too late to get married under the French law, she would simply let him find her on the boat and the captain could marry them. As she reasoned it, his joy at finding her would make him and her forget everything else. As she had the whole day in which to get ready, she now cashed as much money as she dared, leaving half with Henri wherewith to rent Daniel's rooms of him, and with the rest turned her face to the shops. Later, going to say goodby to Olga, she was wildly encouraged and finally spent the night there, writing a letter to her mother in which she explained her sudden departure as affectionately and tactfully as possible; also one to Daniel trying to express what he had meant to her.

The next morning early, having done all this, and in order to avoid meeting Frank until the boat sailed, she went second class on the boat train. Yet, as she also said, all the way to Cherbourg she was possessed by a strange feeling of unreality in regard to her immediate past and for contrast a tremendous sense of reality in regard to the more distant and earlier emotions which leaving Europe seemed to revive. Had she really, really left a strange genius named Daniello?

Was there a man on this very train somewhere named Frank whom she was going to marry? It would have seemed more real to be starting for Geneva or for the overgrown estate of her father in Russia, with him still alive and there present.

Part IV

On the boat, as Lucia said, she discovered all sorts of things about Frank Stafford. He had, of course, been tremendously surprised when he found her standing and smiling at him on the deck after the pilot left. But his unconcealed joy was now mingled with a most unexpected concern. "My darling, if you loved me so, why didn't you get your mother to come along and be with you till we could get married? Of course we can't get married here on the boat. It's really not legal except in emergency. It's a very irregular thing to do; we would have to spend the rest of our lives explaining how it happened to our friends in Canada and everywhere . . . I don't want my wife to have a thing like that hanging over her head."

"But I thought you loved me so much . . ." was what Lucia said she said.

"Of course, of course. It is because I do love you that I say this. I love you but, don't you see, darling, it's just because I do that I want our future to be perfect. Of course, I have forgiven your past; I will never

think of it again. But from now on everything must be open and aboveboard."

And so this now new side of Frank's character which, as she said, startled her—and somewhat disagreeably. For now there showed in him an unusual and quite adamantine concern for formality—a side which Lucia, as she said, had never realized before. While holding no grudge against her for all he had learned or knew, his one concern, as she said she nervously discovered, was for each and every severe tenet of conventionality. They must do just so from now on—do this, go here, do that,—please all those who must be conventionally pleased—and none other. And day by day as they sailed, as she said to me, the English people and stewards and meals seemed to make him more and more different. Although just as devoted and as sincerely in love, almost too idealistically so, as ever, still now formality seemed to have seized on him. Canada! Montreal! The So and Sos—Lady this and Lord that. And with her who almost despised convention. Yet although, as she now said, she felt that this was going to be difficult and that she would have to start all over again to learn, and more, to coincide with if possible, this new side of his nature, still he was just as attractive to her as ever. Only—and the boat not crowded either, he still proceeded to pick her a cabin on a different deck from his own and right next to the boat's trained nurse's, to whose official supervision he proceeded to entrust her. Worse, he was at pains, as she said, to give

her the dignified position of "my fiancée, traveling under the care of a former nurse of her mother's"—a white lie paid for with a golden pound. Not only that, but from then on he was almost painfully careful not to be seen with her on deck too late at night. And never did he enter her cabin nor permit her to enter his, an attitude which, as she said, and in spite of her love irritated her beyond belief. For why not? Had they not already been all in all—each to the other?

Yet all day long they were together. And constantly, and as she said too adorably, he talked of their future and what a wonderful woman he was going to make of her, the position she was to hold. Yet, as she also said, she had always fancied that she had position. But just the same, and to be as affectionate and agreeable as possible, she listened happily and told him in return what a wonderful change it was to be with him. At night, however, as she also said, she could not help speculating about him as a husband. Of course she was going to marry him, but hadn't she better tell him right now that she could never change very much; that she didn't really consider herself just a naughty child who was going to reform, but rather what she was and had always been—socially well placed but free—no different—and that although she was quite willing to wait for him, and draw as near as she could to his ideals later, maybe, still she could not help but feel that they were wasting amazingly beautiful nights on the ocean. But also she decided no, not yet. All

too evidently it had been a shock for him to find her on the boat among some who might know him and her later, and anyhow and plainly she must give him time to get to know her just as she probably required time to understand him better in order that she should not hurt him. And so no union here or further words concerning it. Rather, compliance since, as she said, the one thing she hated most in life was hurting people. It was her weakness to wish to pretend to be what they wanted, even though she wasn't—that is, if she liked them at all. And here was one—her prospective husband—who now thrilled her every time he spoke. Why, of course she must use all her skill and experience to please him.

Another pound, say, and the trained nurse accompanied them to Montreal. And then, once there, Frank took Lucia to an aunt of his who had a pleasant small house half-way up Mount Royal. She was to stay there a respectable length of time, a month or six weeks, say, or until the wedding could be announced and arranged. And since at first sight everything in Montreal appealed to Lucia, she was glad to be there, even this way. The snow still lay in patches on the ground, even though the birches were starting to bud—just like Russia. The aunt was an agreeable, if vigorous, old maid, who went riding two hours every morning and took Lucia along, though she disapproved of her riding astride. By degrees, however—or according to Lucia—she quite won her over by her horsemanship; also by

the way she could discuss literature at table. Since this aunt belonged to a literary club and wished to stand well in it, she also promptly put Lucia up for membership, and so peace reigned there. Desiring of all things that she make a fine impression, Frank was naturally delighted by all this and found in it a reason for putting off still further the wedding. "After all, sweet wife," as she said he said to her, "the longer you live with my aunt and make friends with her set, the pleasanter it will be for us after we are married. People who will usually have nothing to do with an outsider are already beginning to accept you. And Montreal society is terribly conservative, let me tell you."

"I'm not going to mind Montreal so long as you aren't too conservative," is what Lucia said she said, albeit a little weakly. "But if I'm going to stay on with auntie I think I'll get a little studio where I can start working again, just for a few hours every day." This suggestion, as she explained to me, had the effect of a small hand grenade to be caught before it got too dangerous.

"Darling, darling! Studio! For heaven's sake, please remember this isn't Paris!"

And from that time on, or so she said, she began to fear that there might be incurable differences here which were destined to lead to what?

Just the same, as she also explained, there were moments when emotion ran higher in their veins than custom or position demanded. And once he took her

down to a little restaurant in the French quarter of the town where they had delicious wines and salads, after which she felt better—although these trips had to be repeated two or three times a week in order to make up for the more formal engagement dinners and bridge parties ever upon them. For in the French quarter, as she said, they could really talk, and over the wine a warm happiness seemed to take possession of them. Besides, only four more weeks, only three more weeks, and then they would have each other again. Lucia had decided upon an apartment in the French quarter, with one big room for a studio, but when it came to Frank—! All right about the studio as long as it was part of an uptown apartment, but the manager of a bank must live in the strictly English residential section, where were at least five apartment houses to choose from, each with a studio. And as for furniture, anything you like, darling! Let's have a double bed like the one in Paris. (Oh, so he hadn't forgotten after all! Oh, if was only to-night . . . they must have another bottle of wine.)

"On the way home," said Lucia, "I made him forget himself, for a few moments anyhow, but before he left he was again apologizing for his behavior!" And on this occasion, as she also explained, she was too tired or happy, or both, to choose her words carefully. "Oh, don't be such a fool!" was what she said she said or entreated, and that passionately.

The next evening, though, Frank wouldn't take her

to the little French place, and in addition they had a long argument over the expression she had used the night before. In fact, for the first time since Paris Lucia now spoke perfectly frankly and tried to explain her point of view, which, as she said, she saw no reason for changing. "For your sake I am willing to make concessions to your so-called Montreal society, but when we are alone, and at heart, I will always be the same. I am not ashamed of my past, and never will be very different from the girl you picked up at a public art gallery in Paris."

At that he winced mentally and in agony, she said, and even stormed. Well, then, it was not too late, she said she added. She could sail back at once!

But no, no! His whole life from now on was to be dedicated to her and her happiness. The past was past and buried. She must, she must face this new life with him and in a new spirit. Could not this be? From the very first he had fallen deeply in love with her, as he now reiterated, and now she must realize that a man wants the woman he loves to be sacred—(so that he alone can defile her, Lucia said she answered bitterly under her breath—but when he asked her what she said, she could not repeat it).

It all came to a climax, however, and two weeks before the date set for the wedding. The aunt had taken Lucia to a club meeting because there was to be a discussion of Russian literature. Frank had gone to attend a directors' meeting. As soon as the lecturer

stepped up on the platform, Lucia was strangely disturbed. He was not handsome, but gaunt and cynical, not unlike the man she had met going to Dijon. And more, he spoke brilliantly, not very good English, but flaring just the same. "And when he pronounced Russian names," said Lucia, "I felt my heart miss a beat." Afterwards she was introduced to him and at once they started talking Russian. Of course no one else could understand. "How do you like this cold country, my compatriot?" he asked. "I do not mean the climate—our Russia is cold enough—but the men and women? Do you think anyone understood what I said about love to-night?"

Lucia said she could not help sympathizing with his point of view. They must talk—how about tea to-morrow, he asked . . . No, unfortunately, one had to be so careful in Montreal . . . But surely somewhere in the French quarter? . . . Yes, she did know a place . . . Very well then, to-morrow at four . . . It was fun to talk Russian!

It was not the Russian lecturer himself though who troubled Lucia. She was too much in love with Frank physically to be tempted seriously, but he simply showed her that here in Montreal she was a fish out of water. In all of the three months since she had left Paris, this was the first time she had felt perfectly in sympathy with anyone, and he was a foreigner. Either Frank would have to change sufficiently to make the rest of

Montreal bearable, or they would have to go back and live in Paris.

The next evening she suggested this last measure to him, but he merely laughed at the idea. What nonsense! Paris! A woman could never be made to realize that a man's career was of some importance, poor sweet things. . . . And what about a woman's career? . . . Why, of course, she could play at being an artist and have a studio, as long as it was part of the apartment, but she didn't need to be different from every other wife because she could paint. Then, quite unsuspecting his reaction, she told him about her tea with the Russian, just in trying to make him understand her point of view. For the first time, as she said, he completely lost control of his temper, and insulted her as violently as if she had confessed she had gone to a hotel with him.

Well then, said Lucia to me in connection with this, what was the use of dragging this thing out, like the affair with Daniello? "It was, as I saw it then and clearly, just as hopeless, only in a different way. And it could only end in some kind of heartbreak, not for me, but him. I knew now, or thought I did, that I did not love him enough. And so, more cogitation, misery really. It was bad enough now, but how much worse would it be afterwards, especially if there had to be a struggle or various struggles before the eyes of the whole world, in divorce courts!" Should she marry and

stand things until her physical desire was satisfied, or leave now?

"What I really decided—only after a time, as you may guess—was that I admired Frank too much to go into this marriage with him merely for that. And worse—once married—he with his previously unsuspicioned conservatism would take it much harder. And should I bring that on him? Besides, as I reasoned,"—(I am quoting her exactly)—"there were other ways of handling that desire of mine, after all. To be sure, he was my first real experience. Yet there must be others."

Following this, as she said, she tried once more to make him meet her on that ground where she was weakest, so that she would stay, could stay. But no, his new character here in Canada was too strong. He must obey custom, stick by convention. And so, as she then saw it, there was nothing to do but run away, for his sake as well as hers. She tried, as she said, to explain that to him in a letter, which took her the whole night before she sailed to write. But time proved that to have been ineffective.

Yet once gone—for she really fled—there was plenty of time on that boat to regret and plenty of time and opportunity also to make oneself forget in the way that, as Lucia said, she had already considered. However, she did neither, but was still proud of herself for having made the decision to leave. Just the same, once gone, as she said, she suffered too much to make any

other possible; no man really interested her, not even the memory of Daniel. Yet all the time, walking the deck and watching the gray sea, she felt again the way she had felt almost ten years before when looking down into that courtyard after her father's death, she had heard the crash of glass. She had lost something. Love, not only precious in itself, but that would have made her life entirely different if she could have kept it.

As for her future, as she then and there decided, she said, she was not going to be sentimental over that. Most certainly she would not go back to Daniel. But neither would she wait another three years to be seduced again. Nor would she return to the school in Switzerland any more than she could go back to Russia. (Funny, that thought still came up in her mind.) Rather, as she decided, she would seriously take up her work again in a studio of her own, and, as an aside, experiment until she found a lover who could complete, as she expressed it, the frivolous side of her nature. Evidently it was too late for her to find love. Only now one thought would not down. Why couldn't she have loved Frank? Why? She had come so very near it.

Another thing that she decided at this time, as she said, was that she was going to be brutal with herself, the way she had been with others. Only the form of this brutality as I saw it, peculiar,—a self-cure of her love for Stafford via self-satiation with others,—in other words Dowson and Cynara. Thus from Cher-

bourg she sent a telegram to Olga announcing her return and asking her to arrange a supper with two men at her expense that same night. And since Olga loved doing things like that and if the man Olga picked for her was at all suitable, she would start immediately the task of forgetting Frank.

As per her telegram Olga, as she said, met her at the station, and together they rode to an old hotel on the Left Bank. "I decided," said Lucia to me, "that I would wait until I could break the news of my return to my mother more gently than by just my sudden appearance. On the way Olga and I chattered excitedly about a new beau she had and a nice Belgian friend of his whom we were to meet that evening. I just had time to change my clothes, as they were coming for us. Alone in my room, I sank into a chair and looked around. The ceiling was cozily low. There was an enormous mirror over the mantel and two candles on it. Two French doors opened on to a little balcony. The double bed looked so French, with its yellow feather coverlet. Except for an occasional beloved hoot of motor horns on the boulevard, it was so quiet. Nice room, I thought. I hope he will be nice, too, that Belgian."

Well, as she assured me, he was nice, quite—and appreciated the artistic effect of the two candles reflected in the mirror, without any other lights.

After that Lucia started experimenting on a larger scale. She and Olga would compare notes and lovers, and Lucia's life adjusted itself remarkably easily.

Her mother was delighted to see her and forgave her for running away. She was so glad to get her back again that, said Lucia, she made no objection to the studio idea, provided Lucia would spend week-ends at Versailles. Perhaps she was a bit disappointed not to see her safely married, but she could not be too severe now that Lucia was twenty-three and had a right to some money in her own name.

Still, it was not nearly as easy to forget Frank as she had hoped and imagined. Perhaps, after all, as she once said to me, there had been something more than physical attraction. One day she said she thought she saw him cross the Place Vendôme and nearly fainted for joy. Had he come for her? If only he could forgive her, she would be willing to be his mistress, anywhere, anywhere! She inquired at the main hotels; also refused to see a certain lover for a week. But soon afterwards she received a long, sad letter from him from Montreal, showing that he was still there and also that he could not forget her either. But no expression of any hope of reunion.

Lucia, in connection with all this and as she told me afterwards, was at this time almost morbidly interested in noticing how different men reacted to her—whether delightedly or otherwise—and this in the face of her rather successful affairs with Daniel and Frank. One reason she gave for this was that Daniel had apparently looked upon her freshness and youth and perhaps unsophistication as her greatest charms, whereas

Frank, although plainly loving her and having the physical strength that he had, was perfectly willing on the ship and in Canada to wait and wait, and this for social reasons. Yet how could a true lover be so? So she brooded on this, on her return to Europe, although, as she said, giving much attention to one casual affair and another. For by now she had concluded that perhaps no one took her sufficiently seriously, not at least in the compound ways in which she desired to be taken.

And so no lasting affairs—the danger of loneliness (emotional or mental) even in the midst of all temporary sensuality. At the same time, as she said, she had no real inclination toward any lasting affair other than with Frank, who apparently was not sufficiently interested to keep on writing. Once during this time she went out again with Carlos, who had once sought her so avidly, but now, she complained, he contented himself with describing to her his latest amours, and this lowered her spirits not a little. Later there was another affair—but he, like Carlos, talked of other things, "though," she admitted to me naïvely and yet heroically and truthfully, as it seemed to me, "I was quite ready to reward him for his long months of waiting, but he did not lead up to the issue."

Bravo!

Curiosity and some embers of affection led her to find out that Daniel had really left Paris, as he threatened. He had gone to Berlin, but just where nobody knew.

Only Frank stuck in her thoughts, and he did not care. For a time then, she grew more cynical, as she said. Some people might have called her hard. Yet her views and conclusions varied, almost each day and as with the wind. Finally—although she went here and there with one admirer and another who liked her for a little while but obviously, as it seems to me—could scarcely have been moved to love by one who, Dowson-wise, was so infatuated by another—once, as she said, although this I always doubted, she contemplated suicide. There was the Seine, or a boat trip on which she could jump overboard at night. Lastly there was a drug—never a knife—or a gun, since physical injury to herself had always seemed repellent. Yet in the face of all this she still loafed and dreamed. On the whole, as she said of herself at this time, her mind was more philosophically pure than was her body. And yet she never encouraged any man to remain faithful to her nor did she pretend to swear fidelity to any. Sometimes, as she said, weeks would slip by between lovers or avoiding new ones. Then, an odd bottle of wine or a long night of thinking, would stir up the necessity for relaxation and she would indulge in what she might capture. Toward the last, however, she was desperate. And at last she decided that if she had been wise she might better have married Frank and accepted his social viewpoint, and that should he by any chance return she would do so. She had proved, as she thought, that variation without the attendant support of at least one agree-

able emotional or mental companionship—and a *male* mental or emotional companionship at that, could never be satisfactory for her. And so she drifted and drifted.

I wish it were possible to record here that for once in a lifetime, and for the sake of this book, if for no other reason, a truly satisfactory dénouement was achieved. Would that I could so record. Alas, as truly as her Frank had appeared to care for her, as truly did he fail to return. To put it in another way, he did return once and because, no doubt, he cared intensely. But, finding her as before unable to dissemble, and after a fashion insisting on restating her peculiar need as I have outlined it here, he departed. Not that they did not anguish at one and the same time. As she told me they did. But he was neither strong nor broad—possibly not fool enough, as some would see it, to see her as anything but selfish. And plainly she was neither sufficiently loving nor kind to submit to him. In consequence a really final separation with him going one way and her another. And subsequent to that another racking period of misery for both, as I am sure.

But then *time*. Time the great healer—the great sea—the lapping waves of which erase by degrees all traces of what was—old loves, passions, hopes, even dreams! Aye, *Time*. I lift my glass to its power. But after that, other affairs—yet always without love, as she said—or, rather, without real, true love or that seeking

and intense desire that at one time or another so vigorously motivates us all. Yet desire—and love as well as passion. And the vague, world-old dream that sometime, somewhere there would be someone who would love her and whom she could love enough not to wish to look at another. Yet, three years after all this had occurred and at the time I was talking to her—which was in London as it chanced—that one had not appeared. And as assuredly, as I swiftly saw for myself, I was not that one. We might be friends, and good friends. She could, as you have just seen, like me sufficiently to confide slowly and I trust accurately all that I have here set down, this really searching and to me rather sad story. But more than that, no. And because I was not the one.

And then one day she said to me—and before a winter fire in London to which she had removed: "Do you know I do not know what is to become of me. I really don't. Here I am still young, attractive, unfortunately maybe too sophisticated—God knows—sophisticated enough at least—and more or less at a loss what to do with my life. I have friends, relatives and love connections of course. Not only that but time has softened some of my aches. I have even schooled myself not to expect very much of anyone and this principally because I do not expect very much of myself, and because I have been dreaming of how much I might receive from the ideal one who might come but who as I also know is never to appear. So here I drift and

dream. Recently I returned to Paris, opened a studio, and am going to paint, of course, but I am not over there yet. And I have talent as an artist, as you know. Mostly I read poetry and books. And see plays and entertain and am entertained. And now and then someone appears. And I think, Oh, Allah be praised, he! he! But I soon learn as before that I am on the earth. And there is no such he. No doubt the ill is in me. I am sure it is. I want too much and expect to give too little. And one who could be deceived by me would not be the one. I need a strong compelling force whom I could love—before whose strength and temperament I could be humble—maybe. But he has never come and as I fear never will come. So I must one of these days return to Paris and go to work.

"In the meantime, since I have means and social connections and this and that, I can drift and dream—entertaining myself with a dream. But for the most part how bored and weary and lonesome I am. God, how bored."

She lighted a cigarette, lifted a highball and beneath sagging lashes looked at me,—all that she felt and said.

GIFF

(Introduction)

I AM sure that to many this study of a seemingly vague, emasculate and even half-demented soothsayer or interpreter of tea leaves, dreams, and coffee grounds will appear to be not worthy the space given it. If accepted at all, it will be because it passes muster as ironic or sardonic humor, a characterization of a ridiculous and impossible lunacy. Yet for reasons which follow I crave for it most serious attention. For in the face of all inductive science and the strong and yet to me narrow walls of all naturalistic philosophy—the wholly electrical structure of Life with its electrons and atoms —I hold that behind these seemingly foolish predictions which "came true" moves something which is far more solidly real, if less material or electrical, than that which appears here; *i. e.,* knowledge, direction, control. For to my personal knowledge, these predictions did come true, if over periods of time varying from one to five years.

More, at the time—and more definitely now when I think on them in connection with much other data of the same nature that before and since has passed under my observation—they did and do suggest something

which all science, if not philosophy, may deride, yet for me remains a strong probability. And that is that beyond the material or electrical face of life—its remotest and most abstruse and to me quite mystical atoms or etherons or quantums—moves something which, if not less mystical, is still less divisible and quite possibly more real—an all-pervasive intention or plan, if not necessarily wisdom. Also that this reality may not only foreknow but foreweave, so that like the approaching web and pattern of a rolling loom, to one as broken or emasculate and sensitive as this woman we are talking about—(not one more solidly manufactured or sealed by the creative process)—the very process, or at least a portion of its finished, if not as yet enacted, pattern, might so become dimly, and yet truly enough, visible. Clairvoyance? Possibly. A much mocked-at but probably not untrue and sensitive hint. And though like telepathy, (one of the commonest facts of our ordinary mental existence, yet dismissed by science and all naturalism as chance or accident), this may pass as guess-work or the sly deductions or trickeries of money-seeking charlatans, still there is more than that to it; a strange and amazing presentation that from generation to generation and century to century appears to me at least to be knocking for admission, waiting for "scientific" or better yet, sensory recognition of its reality and later its interpretation. Yet until one shall appear who in all sincerity and humility will pursue the endless striæ

wherewith this great foreknowledge of reality foreshadows itself, we shall have "chance" and "accident" as the explanation and the future of life, its visibility and hence predictability to some, denied. None the less, here are the dim and mystical outlines of something that if not foreknowledge and foreweaving at least suggests the same; the craftsmanship and hence intelligence of an intelligence in a machine.

. . . . . .

Her name was Honoria Gifford, but "Hon" or "Giff" she was called by the band of hoyden roisterers and seekers, almost entirely of the female persuasion, for whom over a period of years she told fortunes, as I chance to know. And such fortunes!

"You are second to no lady with this gentleman. You dress up swell and go out with him. I see you standing on an artistic bridge, a bridge of beauty, not duty. As the poet says:

'Love waits, and joy,
The happiest arts the nymphs employ.'"

"You dip into life with a large spoon. It looks to me like you'd own a railroad in Mexico some day."

"Your past is like a truck wagon compared to the automobile in which you will ride soon. Two hearts meet and understand each other. You walk in new shoes, and your dreams come true. You marry this man and go to Paris, where you are honorably entertained in aristocratic homes.

This is a journey of culture, much above the ordinary. You put on a dress of handsome bluish-gray broadcloth and go to a fine theater with an elegant broad stairway. Your guardian angel is swinging incense toward you. Your cup is running over with happiness. 'Surely goodness and mercy will follow you all the days of your life.' "

"Here is a brainy man with money, the St. Elmo type, most élite in his manner, with a straight back and slightly corpulent. He is sitting in a chair of luxury, pulling on his gloves, when an angel rivets his mind on you. You stand before him, firm like an alpenstock, with your hands behind you, refusing something he offers. This appeals to him, because he knows another lady who seizes everything he offers."

"Here is the figure of a patriarch, like the leader of a nation. He is holding a candle above you, guiding you towards a long, narrow road which leads to a broad area of life for you."

"The goddess of fortune sweeps your old life clean, and then comes love."

"Here's a lantern, a big lantern in darkness. It looks as though it sprang up to show you how to use your personality."

"You are standing like the Queen of the Night now, but you'll soon be the Queen of the Morning and use both night and day to make your dreams come true."

"Ah, let's see. Here's a cross, not a cross to bear but a cross pointing to the Rock of Ages. This cross brings you something you want in a religious, moral way."

"What's this? Oh, an owl. Can't you see it? 'When a wise person is born, the owl shrieks with gladness.' This owl is in the tree of knowledge, and you stand under it, ferreting out something that brings you money."

"At the bottom of your cup is a pearl. Feathers float but pearls hang heavy, so don't be afraid you won't get it. And here is a little ship sailing out in sunny seas. ——— is rowing off alone now but he is thinking of you and will come back. Let's see! What month were you born in? November? The topaz is your birthstone. You'll see many sides of life. Thursday is your lucky day. Florida and Mexico are your lucky countries."

"You have shed your last tears. Harvest days are coming. There are trees and flowers growing in places where trees and flowers never grew before. Your dreams come true You look back, only to laugh at the past. You see the butterfly side of life soon. You eat chicken and drink out of a tall, thin glass. You will be living in your regal spirit then."

I have given here merely the Giffordian or Honorian outlines of some of the many predictions made by this fortune-teller-extraordinary to the rounded company I have described. But how shall I portray that ragbag figure, that after-a-fashion (not entirely by any means) ragbag intelligence? For mark you, as I have al-

ready said, I am one who stands convicted of a most unorthodox theory in regard to life, intelligence, and that accumulated store of wisdom or knowledge so-called whereby sociologically as well as organically (in the natural sense) nature, or rather the race, is assumed to progress onward and upward,—to organize, build, beautify. And this is that a new truth is as likely to shine forth suddenly through a broken or partially so, or a weak and distrait temperament as through a wholly sound one. In short, that misunderstood or ignored data is frequently before one in this form. (I refer you to my introduction.) And that Honoria was such a vehicle I have never doubted. In fact, after years of meditation since her death, I stand convinced of it.

But to return to Giff. That bewrayed and semidemented, also half-frightened, half-apologetic, and always retiring and self-effacing, look, which seemed to say: Let no one imagine for a moment that I wish to obtrude or offend. Indeed, the life and light that was in her, if life and light it was, was a wholly quaint and faint and laura-jean-shian thing, a smattering or perhaps, better yet, compote of hearsay culture as well as utility—culture that was no more than a flotsam of songs, poetry, proverb, parable, fable, tale or truth, which chanced to drift into that decayed and shallow harbor, her mind—plus gentility that was innate but colored by spindrift and spume concerning how ladies and gentlemen in some fabulous land of

gentility (England principally, I believe; the old South next) conducted themselves.

But the poetic citations and descriptions of dubious proceedings here and there on great occasions with which she interlarded the more matter-of-fact data revealed by tea leaves and grains of coffee! The amazing similes and half-grasped quotations, picked up from where? I always suspected Laura Jean Libbey, Mrs. M. E. Braddon, Bertha M. Clay, and the author of "St. Elmo" (her favorite novel, by the way), to say nothing of the works of the author of "Hollow Gold," as her most outstanding sources. At times, however, she would spout Longfellow: "Be still, sad heart, and cease repining!" and some of the outpourings of Felicia Hemans. Antedating this may have been some home culture and means. I never really knew, although she always insisted there was. For the most part I took it that with no least consciousness of being dishonest, she had built up a romantic or at least dramatic and trying past for herself, quite like the ladies in her favorite books.

Yet plainly she was not a profiteer, nor of that shabby, grafting tribe that by promises of fortune to the unfortunate or the dubious, ekes out for itself a comfortable if limited life. On the contrary, she received all too little for her predictions. And if she was, as we say and as I know she must have been, "a little light in the upper story," she was nevertheless an industrious, religious and kindly woman, or old maid rather,

who found it absolutely impossible to take advantage of any one and who, entirely apart from the remarkably worded "fortunes" she was wont to pour forth to all and sundry for so little as a dime or a quarter or nothing, as the case might be, worked out a most unsatisfactory and limited life as dishwasher, waitress or chambermaid, the same almost always conditioned by drear and chilly and dusty hall bedrooms—rooms so cold and poorly lighted and poorly papered and furnished that I often wondered how any one could endure them as an unchanging social or economic diet and still retain that buoyant optimism and exalted and controlling faith which apart from the language flow above indicated were among Giff's outstanding characteristics.

But preferably I would present her as she entered anywhere after her working hours or on Sundays or holidays and when she had been called by one or another of her various friends or patrons as she chose to call them to do a little "reading." The air of apologetic and yet conscious gentility and merit with which she would then carry herself, albeit somehow belied by the ash-can hats, gloves, shoes, and flouncy clothes with which she was wont to bedeck herself! But plainly—all of these—the oldest and poorest and most faded type of junk imaginable, picked out of old clothes shops or dug out of what musty closets by those who thought they had found something which Giff might wear! Yet the gloves (always too large and wretchedly

mended) removed with the air of one who skins the finest of kids from tapering fingers. St. Elmo himself at his most imposing moments could not have done better. And the worn and degraded grandeur—once, as I recall, a most miserable and quite astonishing feather boa made up of such feathers as might have adorned a hard-pressed chicken but tucked about her thin and wrinkled neck with a real air; at another time an ancient and most moldy rabbit's fur "ermine" scarf, which was highly regarded by Giff because, as she said if I remember aright, it was the fashion for ladies in England to wear ermine. (Giff, by the way, was born and reared in Canada.)

Yet that sweet and ingratiating light in the eyes of her! And the genial and kindly and ladylike way in which betimes she would lay off these scrapings while enduring at the same time the ragging that sometimes greeted her from these rowdy sponsors and friends who always looked upon her as "great sport" and "a scream."

"Gee, Giff,—you look swell. Look at Giff, will you? Hello, Giff. Nice boa you've got there! Flossy! Certainly is a nice ermine scarf. Six dollars, you say? Well, it's worth all of that if it's worth a cent!" And then the sidewise eyeings of one by another, the funny mouths pulled when "Giff" was not looking; the head noddings, as if to say: Don't miss any of this; it's good. (And it was; from one angle, anyway. It certainly was.)

But that tall and yet only eighty-pound body, frail and semi-tubercular. And the sallow and wrinkled skin, never lovingly admired by any man, you may be sure, even in its bloom, yet still heightened by such five-and-ten-cent-store ointments and lotions as her slim purse would permit. None the less personally I found her remarkably interesting and not so truly "dippy" as her customers seemed to think. For she could interest almost any one by the peculiar flow of her thoughts, melodramatic and floreate at times though they might be. And at fortune telling she was nothing less than remarkable—never doubt that. Mysterious and wonderful! For, as I will show, she told things that in some cases came true to the day and hour; and she told them by looking at tea leaves and coffee grounds, never by reading cards. Cards, in Giff's religious lexicon, were sinful. And Giff was religious if she was anything, yet not obstreperously or obviously but genuinely so. In a quiet and unobtrusive way she believed in God and His protection and guidance. I am sure that she thought that He took part in or was an integral part of every move she made. He placed the tea leaves; arranged the coffee grounds. God got her breakfast for her often when she didn't know where it was coming from—the cash for it, I mean. God directed her to those who wanted fortunes told and who paid her such liberal sums as twenty-five and fifty cents, on occasions even as much as a dollar! In short, God once got her out of an asylum in which she had been cast by

conniving relatives who had managed to have her declared insane in order to strip her of the little patrimony that was rightly hers. Or so she said. And after that God had directed her to that great maelstrom, New York, where since she had managed to eke out a precarious living for lo, some fifteen or eighteen years, if my memory serves me correctly.

Personally I first met her one late December day of the Great War years. She was just entering the quarters of the group that had arranged the meeting, and I recognized her at once by earlier descriptions. Although to her I had been touted as a personage, one to whom it would pay her to be civil, I noticed that she maintained exactly the same demeanor which later I came to know as her natural one: that combination of piteous dependency with the air of one who is to the manor born. This woman is worth studying, I at once decided.

But as to my fortune. She began at once with an analysis of myself, or rather of my prospects in relation to my work, which then as always were a problem. According to her, via the leaves in my tea cup, I was faced by a disappointment in connection with a certain thing I had been doing and upon which I had been erecting certain comforting hopes. (That came true.) Then followed one of those precise predictions very common with her, as in time I learned, and which one could easily check up afterwards. On the seventeenth or eighteenth day of the following January at

about two in the afternoon I was to receive a large sum of money, as much as (please don't laugh) fifty or even a hundred dollars, she couldn't be quite sure. The leaves were crowded. Perhaps it was even more, —"four figures? It couldn't be." But before she had qualified it thusly—

I had exclaimed "My God. "Don't stagger me like this! Say it a dollar at a time, and slowly. I can't stand such large sums mentioned in this easy, offhand way. You mustn't do such things."

"H-s-s-st!" came a voice behind me and when Giff was again rattling on, "You needn't take her too literally. To her fifty or a hundred dollars is a large sum. Ten cents looks as big as ten dollars does to most people. Her fifty or a hundred dollars in your case means more likely five hundred or a thousand. Just wait till the seventeenth and see." I calmed my excited nerves. The thought of the original sum had all but crushed me.

And then a little later, amid a perfect avalanche of poetic citations such as only Laura Jean or the divine author of "Wormwood" could have irradiated, she made a prediction that I was to think of some seven months later and under the exact conditions she was then depicting. "I see here in these leaves," she went on, "a table of some kind. I don't think it's a house table, or if it is it's a very rough one. It looks as though it were made of rough boards. And it's standing under some trees and you are sitting at it. You will make a

trip somewhere and you will sit out-of-doors at a table. And I see some one standing beside you; a young girl, I think. She is handing you something."

"Silence!" I pleaded, offensively and defensively. "Not another word! You mustn't compromise a hard-working author in this fashion. My lot is rough enough. Now I will have any number of explanations to make, and they won't help me in the least."

And this was true, worse luck, for the lady who would take me to task forthwith and keep an eye on me during the entire summer following was at my elbow.

Allons! Came the seventeenth of January, and not a sign of any sum of money and not a prospect in so far as I could see in any direction. Whereupon morbidly I exclaimed that Giff is a liar; I was to have had five hundred or a thousand but where was it? Came the eighteenth, however, and at eleven o'clock a telephone message. A certain English theatrical manager—one Charles Coburn, no less—was on the wire. He had been reading a published play of mine. Only recently he had leased a theater in the very vicinity in which I was then residing. He was endeavoring to arrange for the production of a play which would attract attention. Was my play open? It was. Would I be willing to part with an option on it for the ensuing months? I would. For how much? One thousand dollars, cash in hand to me paid. Silence. Then: when? Forthwith! Thank you, he would let me know later.

Farewell, I thought, hanging up the receiver, that is the last of that.

Whereupon I went to lunch and returned at two-thirty. At three another telephone message. Was I busy? No. Would I come to Mr. Coburn's office directly around the corner? I would. But hold, he had to go out anyhow and would come over to see me. Would I wait a few minutes for him? I would. In five minutes the doorbell. Enter Mr. Coburn; in his hand, visible, a contract and a check. Would I read the contract? I did. Was it agreeable? It was. Would I come with him to the nearest notary? I would. We walked together. I signed. The same was witnessed; a duplicate, signed, was handed to me together with the check for one thousand dollars.

"Well, I'll be damned!" I said.

"What's the matter?" inquired my prospective producer.

"Nothing much. You wouldn't understand, and I don't suppose you will believe it, but exactly this sum of money was predicted as coming to me at about this time by a fortune-teller some weeks ago."

My prospective producer and manager looked at me. "Very curious, isn't it?" he replied, rather indifferently. He was not interested in fortune-tellers at the moment and probably thought me an ass.

Nevertheless, I returned to my studio profoundly affected by the outcome of this thing and curiously speculative as to the scientific or philosophic or material

or spiritual significance of forecasting in general. For if a thing that had not yet come definitely to form in the mind of any one, its exact details, say, could be predicted weeks and, as I came later to see, months in advance, then what was this thing that we call life? Certainly not any haphazard process that each day and each hour and each fresh moment reformed itself, water or cloud wise, and sans rhyme or reason out of all sorts of chemicals and elements. Most certainly not! But rather the momentary and progressive display here before our passing gaze of some elsewhere woven pattern this long time in the making, and now draped over the revolving surface of this wheel, our earth. What else? How else a prediction of something that could not possibly otherwise be known? Subsequently and often since I have seriously offered this thought to those who are attempting to pry behind the arras to unriddle the very befuddling riddle, this living and breathing of ours, that here confronts us, but without results of any kind, thus far.

But now as to the second prediction. But no, we will wait as to that while I go a bit into Giff's history, about which at this time I became curious and took steps to gather as best I could either from Giff herself or from various friends whom I sent to consult her. At that time, as I learned, she lived on the fifth floor of an old, ramshackle tenement which stood in Seventh Avenue between Twelfth and Thirteenth Streets. Her room was tiny and cold, heated through-

out our damnable New York winters by an oil stove. Fifty years old she was at that time too, mind you, and without visible friends or relatives, and with only the income from waiting on table as her chief form of subsistence. But many a Midas of my acquaintance could not conjure Giff's look of unshakable trust nor yet her contented reliance though all the gold of all the mines were stacked at his doors. Time has begun to teach me that it does not come that way.

As I have said before, though, Giff was innately religious, and as a means of support in addition to waiting on table in a restaurant—one of a chain at that time labeled "Codington," I think—she played the organ in a neighboring church with which soon after settling here she had allied herself. It was one of those none-too-successful independent missions called, if I remember correctly, "The Star of Hope" or "The Open Door." Here she played the organ about as a Laura Jean Libbey-ish heroine would play it, in a small-town, by-ear, hymnal, home-sweet-home way. The worthy pastor, having a more distinguished artist to manipulate the keys on Saturday nights and Sundays, could only use Giff on Wednesdays and Fridays. Therefore on these nights she played, for the imposing sum of twenty-five cents per recital. Why he paid her twenty-five cents I have never been able to decide, unless it was because he felt that such regularity and faithfulness were worth something and twenty-five cents was the smallest amount above nothing that looked like something.

Anent this same church phase, I also recall that Giff told fortunes at church festivals for ten, twenty-five or fifty cents, according to the nature of the crowd, yet turning all of the proceeds over to the church, thus strengthening her claim upon a fair share of "Pie in the sky, by and by!"

At some time or other also in her very humble career Giff had not only come by a very small and shabby looking harp which æsthetically she admired almost extravagantly but had also learned to play the same, or rather to pick out certain tunes by ear. And once she told me that she was praying for a bigger one, because she would so love to sit before a full-size harp and play. It was so artistic and lady-like. But when I troubled to observe that she looked very well as it was she added "Oh, yes, but real ladies looked so beautiful and genteel before the really big ones"—music or no music, as I chose to think to myself. Well, in the course of time, following divers prayers and pinchings and scrapings on her part, as she confessed, and all at the expense of her not-too-strong stomach and lungs, God did grant her a medium-size harp, which, according to her, was just too lovely for words. For, as you see, God having relented as is His merciful way, at times, had finally directed her steps to the very place where she found it—an old auction shop, no less, where covered with dust it stood. But for eleven or fifteen dollars, as I understood, she had been permitted to extract it, dust and regild it, and thus artistically

equipped, to once more appear before the world. Her predilection for the harp, as I have often thought since, must have been dictated by that same bizarre craving for luxury and refinement which accounted for the feather boa and the ermine scarf. Where but from this innate and compelling desire, which was assuredly a part of her, could it have derived?—a left-over trace from the period or psychic mood that knew and produced the ladies of our American Godey's Ladies Book days.

Yet all of this, as I scarcely need hasten to assure you, had little or nothing to do (except, perchance, in a repressed and furtive and shamefaced way) with anything that related to sex or the recreative principle. Giff at fifty was still your true virgin, the soul of modesty, pure and without reproach. Knowing her as I did, I could swear that the least conversational drift toward a to her unmentionable fact of life would have brought a delicious blush to her wrinkled face. Not that she would have felt so much outraged as that her maidenly modesty would have called for a blush and a shrinking.

Once she troubled to tell me how it was that she had come to be a fortune-teller. It was this way. When she was still in Canada and before she ever came to the United States, she used to try to see things in her own tea cup, because before that she had had her fortune told by others in this way and had wondered how they did it. And looking, she thought she saw

various and divers things—men and women walking, birds on the wing, (which others had told her were signs of good luck), and less favorable things such as a black horse, which meant sickness or death; a railroad track, which meant a journey by land; a boat on the waves or just a boat, which meant a journey by water, and so on. I cannot give you all the signs. You may study her predictions and see for yourself.

Just the same, and as we all know, she soon found that people like to have their fortunes told, whether one tells them the truth or not. In her case, after a time and after telling many fortunes for nothing or for fun, people began to tell her that what she told came true. Also in certain cases, some of those so favored were so kind as to pay her a little something, a dime or a quarter. In this way, working for a living as she was and making a very poor one at all times, the thought had gradually found a place in her mind that if she could really tell fortunes and do good honest work in that way, might she not use this as a source of livelihood?

But fortune-telling, according to her ideas of conduct and religion, at the time was still sinful. Also as a source of livelihood, it was looked upon by many as low, certainly not ladylike. Hence, before she could think of following it, she had to take the matter in prayer to God. And God had told her, after hours spent upon her knees, that if she told only what was true and helpful as she saw or felt while grain-gazing,

it would be all right. Hence, she told only what she actually saw or believed.

But to return to that earlier phase of her life which related to her incarceration in an asylum and which same appeared to haunt her, and from the suspicion attaching to which she was ever anxious to rid herself. I think this last had something to do with the relative complex which existed in her as in all of us, the blood desire to stand well before those who are of our own blood, or to amaze, astonish, or overawe those with whom we have been associated in childhood. Giff certainly had this complex. She seemed to me at least to be living and working in New York in order to enable herself at some time or other to prove to said relatives that she was not nearly so "loony" as originally they had dared to assume. I could never gather that there was any definite desire for revenge in her. On the contrary, she was too kindly and forgiving to long harbor bitter thoughts toward any one, even toward those who might have worked her an irreparable injury. Just the same, one of her wishes, often expressed to those who knew her best, was to one day return to Canada "on the plush," as one of my unworthy roaming friends used to put it, and lower these same souls a peg or two with a vision of herself as a New York success. Item: one feather boa; item: one ermine throw; item: one to-the-manor-born harp; item: several trunks laden with flouncy, fluffy, second-hand or discarded finery. If that wouldn't reduce the natives

of one small town somewhere near Toronto, what would?

But now as to the plot that led to her incarceration as insane. Once, according to her, her wretched relatives having become greatly displeased with her because, as she said, she had a desire to shower her share of the family inheritance upon the poor and lowly (and certainly, in view of her general attitude, this seemed in pattern) they had agreed among themselves to have her declared insane, or better yet, merely to spirit her away to some private asylum and leave her there. And so, according to Giff, they did, seizing her at a time when she had fallen ill, and under the pretext that she was being removed to a hospital, incarcerating her in this private infirmary. And once in the clutches of the authorities there, she was forced to remain. Whether there was any truth in this story was never proved to my satisfaction, but her description of the circumstances attending all this as presented by her were not only minute but decidedly realistic and convincing.

Thus too weak to more than recline in the carriage in which she had been driven to this asylum, she had none the less noted, or so she said, imposing and well cared-for grounds about the institution. Also carriages in the roadways and various buildings and attendants. But once within, and for reasons known only to herself, she had concluded that the place was not a hospital and had screamed to be taken away. Too late. She

was taken to a bare, little white-washed room with a small barred window high above her head and reach. And presently in came a hardy female attendant, who without ceremony at once commanded her to be undressed by the time she returned, then went out and locked the door. Horrified at this command (and knowing Giff, you would believe this), she refused so to do. Whereupon the attendant returning and finding her still dressed, and wishing to impress upon her the necessity for obedience, tore her clothes off. Then, weeping and sick, as she insisted she was, she was pushed into a bathtub—fairly toppled into it—where she was compelled to scrub herself with a coarse brush and wretched soap. Then given a rough towel she was ordered to dry herself and then furnished with a coarse slip which she was compelled to wear during her stay there. (One's solicitous relatives!)

During this period, which she estimated to be more than three years, she, as she always insisted, quite lost track of time. No books or papers of any kind were supplied, and all but the most helplessly insane were kept busy at menial tasks, scrubbing, dishwashing, waiting on table, cleaning the wards, and looking after the still more helpless inmates. There was, to be sure, a large and presentable mess hall into which three times a day all were marched, the men eating at one end and the women at the other. And the food, as she retold, though poor, was not vile, she could make no complaint as to it. But she firmly contended that

she had never been insane, even for a moment, and that the knowledge of the great injustice done her had caused her great anguish. But she kept her faith in God and His love, and was eventually aided to escape by an attendant with whom she became friendly and who believed that she was being unfairly dealt with.

More, the observations made by her concerning the life of this place were not those of an insane but rather of a sane and quite intelligent person, as I thought. Thus, she was fond of telling how one evening at the supper table a large, fat woman lunatic took up a mustard pot and solemnly ate all the mustard, the tears streaming down her vacant face yet without sense enough to realize that the thing was not comfortable and not especially appetizing. Another woman entered the shower bath of her ward one day and in the absence of the attendant turned on the boiling water and all but cooked herself into eternity, without even realizing that the water was hot. There were stories of inmates who sat in rows and annoyed each other with unkind remarks until one or another would flare up in anger and start to leave or fight, whereupon an attendant would usually appear in time to prevent hostilities or a not permitted departure. Also there were monthly dances, supervised by numerous attendants, at which the sane and insane of both sexes danced together. Also there was a story of a red-haired Irish attendant, a woman, who was known among the lunatics as "the white murderess." It was

whispered that, single-handed, she had choked to death now one and then another of those who were not sufficiently submissive. These were but a few of the tales that Giff told with great clarity and force—scarcely the observations of a hopeless lunatic, anyhow.

Yet during her time there she was apparently forgotten by her relatives, as well as all others. And when she managed to escape she was afraid to take any action against her family or even to permit her whereabouts to become known or to stay in her own country, lest once more she be seized by them and returned to the asylum. It was for this reason that, penniless and friendless, she eventually found her way into the United States. In borrowed clothes, as she once told me, she slipped across the Canadian line into Detroit and there began her free life as a dishwasher. She had washed dishes in the asylum.

But, as I think it important to note, she never intruded this portion of her life into her conversation unless seriously importuned so to do as by myself. Rather she was what might be called an incurable optimist, and despite all her ills, past and present, was engaged only in counting her numerous blessings and thanking the Giver of all Things for the same. Dishwashing, waiting on table, working in a laundry or as chambermaid remained for her the staples of her vocational life until quite the end. Fortune-telling, harp and organ playing were merely divertissements or dignify-

ing social opportunities which brought her in contact with the grand and successful of other walks.

And in this connection sometime after she came to New York it had dawned upon her that by combining these various resources she could go almost anywhere—to the seashore or mountains in summer and to the winter resorts in winter. For by the mere taking of a job as waitress or chambermaid in a summer hotel or camp she could assure herself of the necessary transportation. And once there, how easy to connect up this same with her skill as fortune-teller, harpist, speaker, etc., and thus add to her social connections as well as her income! So, by degrees and via the mission enthusiasts and leaders in different places, and the help about the various hotels where she worked and for whom she told fortunes for nothing or for a dime or a quarter, she finally came to be introduced to the guests of some hotels, and in this fashion not only her income but her reputation grew. So much so that toward the last at least she was able to say, and with quite an air (of that you may be sure), that she thought she would go to the mountains this coming summer, or to Palm Beach or Ormonde or Miami about the first of December. And by degrees, and in her own way, and during a period of some three or four years before she died, she was able to take part in the social life of Asbury Park, Belmar, Ocean Grove, Atlantic City, Narragansett, the Adirondacks, White Sulphur, Palm Beach, Asheville, Miami and the like as fortune-teller-extraor-

dinary to all who had any interest or hope in the future. And hearing betimes from one and another of those who knew her of these peregrinations of hers and chancing to find myself in either the heat or the snow of New York and unable to leave I quite envied her.

In the course of this last period of her life as it appeared, and as odd as it may seem to some, she became the owner of a little property, a lot, no less (ten dollars down and ten dollars a month) in the fair city of St. Petersburg, Florida, where eventually, I believe, she was planning to spend her declining years. At the same time, as she once explained to me, she was beginning to realize, at fifty-five or thereabouts, that after all and despite her skill and obvious success as a fortune-teller, as well as the favor and protection of the Lord, she was more or less alone in the world and would be more and more so unless by some process of thought she would contrive a welcome and living companionship in some form. Strangely enough, she had no least leaning toward cats, dogs, or pets of any kind. And always a confirmed and hopeless spinster, she had, long since, apparently, given over all hope of interesting a man, if ever she had even so much as entertained so reckless a thought. Therefore, her mind now turned to a new and, as she saw it, wholly certain source of comfort—an orphan child, no less and preferably a boy. But adoption, as she presently discovered, was a difficult business. For here in America one needed not only a good character but some means and a fixed abode

before any of the agencies which control the interests of orphans would vouchsafe any such boon. In short, it was necessary to establish a home and a sure means of support. Therefore, the lot in St. Petersburg bought on the installment plan and her dreams in connection with the same for its development and future use.

Only, as she now discovered, getting a lot paid for was in itself a long and tedious process. All in all, if I recall aright, it required some four hundred dollars to clear title to the lot she had selected. In addition to this, if ever she were to be permitted to adopt a child, she would be compelled to prove that she was quite able to support one. But how? By fortune-telling? The mere thought of it convinced her that no child-placing agency would ever place a homeless child in the care of any fortune-teller! Hence obviously it was necessary to find a more stable means of existence. And thinking along this line an idea finally dawned on her. She would establish a rest or tea house on this same lot on or near the beach, where the weary Florida tourist, ambling along the beach, could cool his or her heels and fevered brow while drinking tea and eating cake and having his or her fortune told by Giff herself. Only in connection with the child-placing agency and the hoped-for child, it was necessary that this fortune-telling feature of the tea room should be kept dark,—not that it was so wrong, as that our American political and social arbiters could not or would not understand her compact with God.

But unfortunately in connection with this tea house idea, as well as the lot, there was a total of some eleven hundred dollars to achieve and no new or better resources in sight than those outlined. Yet, as I eventually saw for myself, she was not downhearted, but rather elated, by the great task, and went about telling how certain it was that the Lord would aid her, since never, as yet, had He failed her. (Do you mind if I rise and bow.) Therefore long before the lot was ever paid for, as I was told, the mail of various portable house manufactories of America east and west was rather heavily charged with missives from one Honoria Gifford requesting information as to the lowest price for a small portable mail order house or pavilion delivered at St. Petersburg, and capable of sustaining at least one large, bright awning such as one notes in Florida resorts; also various "high-toned" (the adjective is Giff's) wicker chairs and tables. (Smile not, O grandiose reader! Remember the poor and lowly!) Next, if everything went well, she was to dress up lady-fashion as became so "high-toned" and delightful a place, and indulge in "psychologic readings." (I gave her that phrase.) Also the idea of advertising the same and so attracting trade and fame. But as to the phrase, "psychologic readings," she had some doubt. The term, it seemed, was a misnomer, for she still insisted that tea leaves and coffee grounds furnished her with her finest and most accurate readings or mystic suggestions. And were they or were they not "psycho-

logic"? (Reader, are they or are they not psychologic?)

More, in connection with the St. Petersburg tea room, which was to pave the way toward that solidarity which would permit of the adoption of a child, a bank account. She must first save before she could proceed. And so an original deposit of two dollars, as I learned. Yet by working here and there and "reading," she was able to add to this by degrees. Only as I heard afterwards and from one source and another, her reserve supply of cash was rising but slowly; also that that same meant an economic pinching that finally affected her health, though I can honestly assure you that I never saw her when I thought she had any health or weighed more than eighty pounds, say.

More than that, between these summer and winter hegiræ of hers she was accustomed or temperamentally compelled to revisit New York, her one and greatest urban love—the city, as she always said, that had been most kind to her! And it was in connection with these visits that I most frequently saw her, since it was her spiritual as well as affectional duty at such times as she saw it to not only look up all her old-time friends and report progress and the various blessings vouchsafed her by God, but this she regularly did, myself being one of her beneficiaries, tell the fortunes of one and all who had previously known her. And so it was that I came to know so much of her as well as my future, worse luck.

But on one of these same New York visits—en route

to Ormonde, I believe—she took a room for the nonce in that same wretched neighborhood in which she had first starved, because, as she always said, she "knew every one around there"—Mr. Switzer, the Door of Hope minister for one, and Mrs. Beasley, who ran the gloomy shack which she counted as her New York home. And it was while occupying this room that one night she overslept—never came to, or awoke, to be exact. The reason for this, as it appeared afterward, was that, being poor and seeking always the most inexpensive forms of existence, she had been furnished with an oil stove only—her favorite form of heat as she once said to me. And said oil stove provided by her landlady as well as the Generous Giver of All Things, was a small and carbondioxidous affair of a none-too-discriminating disposition. (It could not or would not discriminate between the righteous and the unrighteous.) And being left burning one night by Honoria, in order that she might not suffer from too much cold, it had burned too low and so had come to emit sufficient fumes to overcome the small spark which Honoria called her life. Weep not. She rests well.

Hence the conclusion of this true, if curious, tale. No orphan, you see. No well. No weary and remunerative travelers at St. Petersburg seated under the palm trees and being "psychologized" and served with tea and ice cream. No Giff in summer finery and bliss and gratitude. Nothing, in short, unless death in a hall bedroom, her hall bedroom, and from the fumes of a

dioxidous oil stove, be something. Oh well,—we can't have everything, can we? But worse, a shabby little funeral in New York, attended by some four or five—the minister of the Door of Hope for one and Mrs. Beasley for another. The bank account, looked into afterward and eventually forwarded to those loving relatives in Canada who, as Giff had insisted, had incarcerated her as insane, totaled $278, almost enough to pay for the Florida lot.

But then, think how much more would have been required to make "come true" the tea room and the well and the wicker furniture and the awning and the orphan!

. . . . . .

P.S. But I cannot close this history of Giff without a reference to Nan, a life-loving pagan and hoyden who for considerably over a period of five years fed her parched desires on Giff's erratic and seemingly half-lunatic mutterings. Nan, I am sorry to report, is not a part of this book. But she it was who compiled for me, after a shorthand transcription, at least one hundred solid typewritten pages of Giff's predictions, in hers and other cases, and from which record the quotations at the beginning of this study are taken and the last one of which refers to Nan herself, the girl who would one day "eat chicken and drink out of a tall, thin glass."

Nan was of that semi-practical and semi-mystical temperament which believes and yet does not believe. From various conversations with her, and when she

was decidedly poor and rather hopeless, I gathered that Nan had yielded to an abiding faith in some force which if directly appealed to via intensive thought, as in prayer, say, would act in one's behalf. It mattered not that the person so appealing was either good or evil. Nan certainly was neither markedly one nor the other, and in her was no thought, let alone acceptance, of any prescribed faith or creed. On the contrary, her meditations as well as her appeal, I am sure, were pagan, personal and direct. Yet because of her positive faith in the willingness and ability of a superior force, the nature of which she would not trouble to dwell on, to aid one, if it would, she was naturally interested by Giff, since Giff, via her soothsaying, must represent a related if not exactly identical point of view.

How often have I not seen Nan sitting or lying and thinking or meditating on this profound and all-pervasive power or force or creative energy, as she liked to think of it, which could, if it would, give one what one desired and, in some instances, in very material, unmoral and pagan ways—although said superior force has always been thought to be moral, I believe—almost unduly righteous, even. And betimes allowing Nan to work for as little as eighteen dollars or less a week and to live in a spare room and alcove containing little more than her books, her victrola, her typewriter, some cigarettes and kitchen utensils and her meager little closet of clothes—when she knew or she insisted that she deserved so much more. Of course, there was also

a center or reception place for the men through whom and by turns came dinners, dances and week-end trips. Only as yet, not *the* man nor the position or luxury to which she aspired. Yet a kindly and even romantic, if wholly unmoral, attitude toward life on her part. Not too much grumbling or complaining. And always this faith in this supreme force which could, if it would, act in regard to one. (I commend this to all who are not as well placed as they would be.)

But even so, Nan had her periods of depression. And once, in a fit of supreme despond, she wrote to me that Giff was surely a joke. There was nothing to her predictions. Her life (Nan's) was obviously a failure. For, as you may guess, she was not growing any younger and she had not been one to conserve her youth. Indeed, I myself, observing her over a fairly long period of time, began to grow dubious.

But behold! Listen! I tell you nothing but what is true! There was an absence from New York on my part of something less than three years. During that period I heard little from Nan save as above—darker and darker conceptions of her future, as well as of Giff's foreshadowing powers. In short, at the time,—she had finally lost all faith in Giff as a fortune-teller. Nothing of all she had predicted over a period of years—"the thin, tall glass," etc.—had come true and she was, as she wrote me "off her" forever. And yet. . . . But harken! I return to the city, and for old sake's sake call Nan on the telephone. Yet now a

change—something in her voice—a certain gayety or ease or lilt no less. Plus a something else—caution I believe is the right word. For now she added—and never this before to me, would I mind meeting her out for lunch or dinner somewhere rather than trouble to come to her place? For . . . but wait . . . She would tell me when she saw me.

We met, and then a tale. Since her last and darkest word to me concerning Giff and her predictions and herself, there had been, well, a most interesting development—a flirtation, no less, and with a most interesting man, one somewhat older than herself but very well placed materially and devoted to her. True, she had not cared for him so much at first and did not now in some ways. He was too practical and perhaps unromantic, too thoughtful of stocks and bonds. But would I believe it, he was worth several millions; was the sole owner of an enormous storage warehouse—ground, buildings, business, all. More, he had a large estate in New Hampshire. Also a yacht, 110 feet in length and beautifully appointed. In this he traveled a great deal, alone. His wife had died six years before, and since then he had been trying to divert his mind and take life a little easier. But now, now, as sure as anything, he was proposing marriage. And jealous! If he should hear of this meeting!

"Then Giff was right after all," I said.

"Well, it certainly looks so."

"And when do you expect to marry? Come now, no bluffs!"

"New Year's day, I think."

"The new leaf?"

"Well, yes. Besides, he has a superstition in regard to it. It seems that so many good things have begun for him then."

"So Giff was right after all. What?"

"Yes. She was."

And so on New Year's Day the marriage in question. And therewith a long acquaintanceship with poverty as well as a most pagan bohemia ended once and for all. And in its place for Nan the yacht and the estate in New Hampshire; also a house in lower Madison Avenue, afterwards sold and a more central apartment in the Seventies taken. And Nan—she of the typewriter and victrola and kitchenette—in furs and jewels —(modest ones, I will admit), with a town car and social connections such as she had never dreamed of having when I first knew her. That "thin, tall glass." "You eat chicken."

. . . . . .

P.P.S. But I am forgetting the matter of the prediction concerning myself and the table in the woods. One summer morning about six months after said prediction, I was writing at a table made of fence rails and some old boards from a decayed barn, in the mountains. But under such a canopy of green leaves and with such a view as Robin Hood himself would have

approved of. And I had come there after a quick and, as I thought, original decision, the result of an unexpected invitation. About noon then one day I looked up to see standing beside me at the table the daughter of mine host, holding some letters toward me. In a flash, and for the first time, came back the prediction made months before.

"Well," I said, really arrested, "now what do you know about that?"

"About what?" asked the girl, laughingly.

So I told her.

But——

Oh, ye of little faith, judgment, judgment!

ERNITA

I KNOW Ernita. I know her honesty as well as I know her clear, unflinching, truth-seeking, love-seeking eyes, and I commend to your attention this outline of the circumstances which plunged her eventually into the very midst of one of the greatest social upheavals in the world's history.

. . . . . .

She was born in Laredo, Texas, in 1895, her parents and grandparents having traveled from Illinois in a covered wagon to stake their claims. The hardships of this pioneer life caused her father finally to contract consumption, which resulted in his death and left her mother with four young children—Ernita, aged seven; Alice, three years older; and two boys, one a baby and the other twelve years old. The proceeds of the sale of their claim Mrs. Bartram invested in property in the growing town of Nacto, but possessing no business sense, advantage was often taken of her by sharp real estate dealers. But there they lived, moving from house to house as she tried to increase her income by reinvestment and taking in boarders. Still young and attractive, she could, no doubt, have found another husband, but the children stood in the way of that, and those years were a hard struggle.

One of their many moves, as Ernita once told me, stood out in her memory. A ten-room house in the poorer section of the city, near a big flour mill. Unfortunately, the "red light district" invaded their very street. Pretty ladies in kimonos lolled on the porch of the house next door in the evening, and there were sounds of music and many men visitors. Eventually, although Mrs. Bartram and the madam gossiped over the back fence and exchanged recipes and confidences, she had to sell the place at a loss, for she feared for her daughters and for the reputation of her boarding house. Ernita had only a faint idea of what it all meant, but her sister no doubt understood and was influenced by it.

At this time the elder brother began working as an errand boy in a wholesale hardware house, (with which, at the time I knew her, he was still connected as traveling salesman), and Alice, as soon as she finished grammar school, took a commercial course and became a stenographer. Ernita, on the other hand, always most favored, as she said, by her mother, because of her ambition to do something indefinitely wonderful, was permitted to go to high school. Of a brooding, sensitive nature, unhappy and pessimistic about the meaning of life, Mrs. Bartram always hoped that this daughter would either distinguish herself or marry rich. But before the girl's last year in high school, her health broke down from overstudy. Fortunately by that time, the family fortunes had improved to some extent. Alice had married a cashier in the National Cash Register

Company, and the elder brother was doing fairly well. So Ernita was taken by her mother to California to recuperate. There was, at the same time, a bit of romance in this trip for Mrs. Bartram, for they were going to stay with the family of a former boarder of hers, a young sheet metal worker who had been in love with her for a long time and had returned to work in his home town in California, somewhere near San Francisco.

This trip opened up a new world to both Ernita and her mother. For so related were they in temperament, she said, that they were like two children in their delight. Neither had ever seen a mountain, or the sea. Up to her eighteenth year, Ernita's little world, so she said, had been Texas and such things as could be captured from books and dreams. And now, in this little California town, not so very far from San Francisco, sweethearts made their appearance for the first time. Before that, of course, there had been boys who had made advances, but sex as a definite physical contact, and as she was very careful to explain in regard to her early life, had no lure for her. In fact, as she said, it seemed wicked, and even shameful. Visions of intimacy scarcely ever came to her, or if they did, in so dreamy a way that they really did not stir her. Now a fat German grocery delivery boy hung around, keeping the family supplied with mushrooms which he gathered on the hills or bringing Ernita lovely wild flowers. And later he even wanted to marry her. But a move

to another part of the town finally disposed of him. Next, the son of a neighbor called regularly, taking her buggy riding and to San Francisco to the theater. His mother would have liked them to marry, but they were both too shy to get anywhere.

Mrs. Bartram, in the meantime, had broken with the metal worker—who really constituted one of the reasons for her coming west—and he now, as Ernita said, proceeded to transfer his devotion to her. However, he was in no way attractive to her, being weatherworn and set in his ways. Also, long before this she had sensed his relationship with her mother and hated him for that. According to her, as she saw it then, there was something unbelievably disgusting about it all, and she could not endure it or him because of it. So now, in consequence of both women repulsing him, he left. Yet without his support, as she afterwards explained, the life struggle for the two of them would have been and was harder, for he had always contributed to the larder of the family, although she had scarcely sensed it at the time. Worse, Ernita wanted very much to go to a university, and that was now impossible. And more than worse, the following summer, after Ernita finished high school, she and her mother were compelled to work in a cannery—the only thing they could get to do at the time. But, as she resignedly explained, they were quite happy just to be in such a beautiful country, though they lived in a tent and worked very hard for

pay which was little more than enough to buy their food.

That fall, though, the cannery work ended, and once more they were faced with the necessity of finding employment. Ernita, so she said, tried a course of training in a telephone school in San José, where girls were paid while learning, but for her it was dull work and nerve-racking, for her mind, as she always said, was on something not so practical—castles in the air, really. So when at the end of the course she was instructed to report for duty at a central station at midnight, she was suddenly seized with horror at the prospect, packed her belongings, gave up the little room in which she was living alone, and took the car back to the little town of Temple and her mother. Mrs. Bartram, alas, back at her old job of running a boarding house—the only fairly profitable thing she knew could do nothing for her. The house was an old one on the outskirts of town and, as Ernita said, depressing to her. The mere prospect of residing in it for a day, let alone for so much as a length of time, seemed to darken her entire future. So to escape—after any fashion, really—she started going to night school and studied stenography, typing and bookkeeping.

Out of that, after months, came a job at eight dollars a week as general office drudge for a real estate firm—Wichet, McGillig & Tobey. A queer trio of rascals, according to Ernita. Wichet, large, indolent and old-fashioned; McGillig, small, vain, snappy, up-to-date; and

Tobey a shrewd, resourceful and conscienceless little Irishman, who was determined to succeed at the world's expense. It was McGillig who used to take her by the arm and tell her that there was everything in this game if only she would take an interest in it and, incidentally, him. And Wichet and Tobey also by degrees drew near with the same murmured advice. But they were not for her. In fact there was no real happiness here for Ernita, for she saw, or thought she saw, her dreams of something better in life fading into humdrum and distasteful labor. Worse, she was lonely, not having found any one to whom she could respond with any degree of warmth, and at the same time haunted by exaggerated notions of how happy other people were, especially girls, and how little she had to do with. Clothes, for instance, she was sure added so much to one's charm—brought out so many things—whereas she, because of her poor world, her home, this, that, could do nothing. Yet was she not as attractive as others? She thought so, at times, she said. At other times not. Poor clothes, her humble home life, so many defeats in the past. "Really," she once said to me, "I am sure I had no very clear sense of what I was or might be. Besides, I brooded over my mother's life."

"God, how I suffered when her spirits were low or her face truly sad!" confided Ernita to me one day. "I cannot tell you! And it was these things, I am sure, that first set me to speculating upon the why of things. The great fortunes of some. Their houses and posses-

sions. How did they come to have them? And why? How were they so different from my mother and myself? You say I was bitter because of my own defects, and that such bitterness is not entirely justifiable, too self-centered. And yet, how was I to straighten myself around to a more optimistic point of view when I was as I was? I could laugh and smile, and I noted when I did so that various types of men whom, in spite of our poverty, I considered beneath me, were drawn to me. To avoid their attentions I had at last to affect an even greater reserve and primness than was really characteristic of me. Mostly, if I were to try to define myself at that time, I would say that I was secretly depressed or sad, but smiling and maybe a little pretentious in regard to a courage which I did not really feel."

Another thing that depressed her at this time was the fact that the real estate firm with which she was connected was not honest—quite flagrantly, if not obviously, dishonest—although, as she personally explained to me, she only dimly sensed that all of their dealings were not as they should be. One of them concerned a new city hall for Temple—a grand bit of graft for all the politicians and real estate operators of the region. Ernita explained it as follows:

"All of the real estate agents appeared to be speculating on a possible site. McGillig and Tobey were in with a local gang of politicians who were boosting some marsh land lying between Temple and Point

Argos as unquestionably the site of this new building. And to convince a doubting public they finally began the erection of a brick building out on the desolate mud flats which were the backwash of Argos Bay. On this they placed a big sign reading—'New City Hall.' Naturally, there was a rush of the uninformed to buy the land while it was cheap. I even suggested to my mother," said Ernita, "that we should take a lot because I, too, thought it was the future site, but we never did. Land sold for as high as a thousand to three thousand dollars a lot. Japs, Chinese, and Hindoos especially were attracted, but since in California this would have a bad effect on other land sales, the firm benevolently bought the lots for these aliens in its own name and then these people came in regularly and made their payments. Before most of them had finished, however, the swindle was exposed, and they lost all they had invested. Because of the scandal that followed, the firm decided to split. McGillig, the most daring and engaging of the lot, wanted me to go with him, and offered me forty dollars a month and a connection with him. Tobey also wanted me to go with him, but I spurned both offers, merely staying long enough to close the books for them. And it was on the basis of my figures they finally dissolved partnership."

But, at this time also—while she was working for the real estate firm—the librarian of the town library, which she was in the habit of visiting several evenings a week, being taken by her looks, as she said—sug-

gested that she prepare herself to be his assistant. She described him to me as a tall, thin, dark, serious man, highly respected in the community, who two years before had lost his wife, and probably at first saw in Ernita a suitable successor. But his cheerful courtesy was interpreted by her as mere friendly interest and not connected in any way with love or sex. And he also, after a time, must have sensed that she was far from understanding his import as a man, his emotional or sensual needs, for he soon ceased his efforts to impress himself upon her in that way and turned his attention to persuading her to study for the library position—perhaps in the hope of bringing about by propinquity the result he desired. Yet that, too, eventually came to nothing.

Yet this, as she saw it then, was a great step up for Ernita. To be a librarian! Or even an assistant librarian! This charming building, with its marble walls,—(one of those small gift libraries that dot America),—seemed to her at the time, as she said, to be identified with some of those grander things to which she aspired. So without informing her employers for whom she was still working and of whose ways she was beginning to be suspicious, she began an evening course in library methods, and after a year was ready to take on library work. And it so happened that just at the time that the sins of her employers were beginning to overtake them; their crooked deals to be noised about, Ernita found herself in this position to leave them. Also, as she said,

she felt with the library work would come a life nearer her dreams.

Up to this time, as she explained to me, she had had no affairs with boys beyond those mentioned, unless going to a dance, a party, or a movie, with one or another and being very much disgusted at their awkward attempts to kiss her, may be construed as affairs. Yet her mother was still taking in boarders, and now one of these—a mechanic in a Standard Oil plant, where her youngest brother was also working—began paying attention to Ernita. He was much older than she was, but good-looking, as she said, and well-mannered, and because of these qualifications, she responded to some extent, to the point at least of accepting for a time a diamond ring from him. Her mother, as she added, while retaining much higher notions of what Ernita's marriage fate should be, still with her characteristic despair, made no great protest against her seeming choice, was willing indeed that she should marry this man—a mood or weakness in her which Ernita afterwards half resented.

"I think she must have felt that both she and I were too poorly placed in the world to expect much," commented Ernita regarding this. "Life, as she probably argued, had caught me as it had caught her before me."

Yet the engagement did not last long. An instinct *for better things,* as Ernita put it, or just plain common sense, saved her. So finally she told her suitor that she could not really care for him, whereupon he became

very angry and demanded the return of his ring. And this, she said, she gladly gave back to him.

But co-existent with this was still the sheet metal worker who had once lived with her mother and, despite his dismissal, continued to hang miserably about in the background, hoping, as Ernita thought that she might become despairing enough to accept his aid. In this connection she related a to me illuminating incident. One evening she and the "fiancé" whom subsequently she dismissed were sitting in her mother's little boarding-house parlor, having just returned from a movie. After a while her "fiancé" began kissing her, and though liking him so little she remained passive. It seemed to her, as she said, that she should have a beau and eventually—and that fairly soon should marry some one. But then becoming bolder he put his hand under her skirt. She confessed she was fascinated while at the same time disgusted. But just at this moment there was a loud banging on the front door. Guiltily she ran to open it, and there stood her despairing admirer, the sheet metal worker. He had been spying and was white with rage. "Where is your mother?" he demanded. When told that she had gone to bed, he rushed upstairs and told her that he had looked in the window and had seen what he had. Her mother called Ernita upstairs, but, always ashamed to talk about sex, questioned her only feebly, and when assured by her daughter that it was all a lie, chose to believe her, and so the metal worker departed defeated.

But through this same man and regardless of his dislike of her, as Ernita explained, eventually came a contact which was to affect her whole life. Although of a most disagreeable temperament, her metal worker—still he was extremely intelligent, a free and interesting thinker, and had heretofore exerted not a little influence on the opinions of both Ernita and her mother. He was a socialist and a radical after a fashion, although still interested in religion or at least in such personalities of the local and national religious world as seemed to reflect some of his own mental unrest; and on Sundays he was accustomed to go to any hall or independent church in San José or San Francisco where a seemingly liberated divine was preaching a broader faith than could be found in the ordinary or orthodox churches. And it was through him finally that there came to Temple to open a small church or mission a young divinity student from the Unitarian School at Berkeley. Long before this though, in Texas, as I should have explained, Ernita and her mother had broken away from the orthodox church and joined the Unitarians, who at that time were looked upon as radicals, religiously speaking.

So when this same metal worker solicited their support for a Unitarian Church in Temple, they signed their names. More, Ernita was given a Sunday School class where in connection with her work she soon after met the divinity student.

"He took to me at once," said Ernita, "and maybe—

I have sometimes thought so—I was the cause of his finally deciding to come. He was slender and delicate-looking, with very dark skin and brown eyes, and wearing eye-glasses. At that time he seemed to me at least a most romantic figure. He was so superior, I thought, especially to the world with which I was familiar."

Interestingly enough, as Ernita explained, her mother never liked him. This may have been because she sensed that her daughter might leave her to go with him. Or possibly it was because the World War having begun and both women being violently opposed to it from the socialist point of view, the divinity student was not. Or maybe it was because he was too religious or socially righteous. Bumptious he was, as Ernita described him, with the most standardized, world-saving views imaginable. It was a righteous war. Germany was all wrong—a beast of evil—a Hun horde marching out of hell upon a pure and innocent world—whereas England and the allies were snow-white lambs, fighting, and without any evil deeds on their side, to save the world for all that was worth while—not themselves, its shining mentors, by any chance. But Ernita and her mother, alas, had been reading current political and social science and were fairly convinced that it was all a gross and brutal contest between capitalistic powers seeking purely material advantages. England, France, and Russia were no better than Germany, if as good, according to them. And many were the arguments

between Ernita and her mother and this young divinity student, who while they were almost bursting with indignation appeared to be enjoying himself hugely and worse, condescendingly.

Although never agreeing on anything, as she said, yet here was the first man to whom she felt really chemically attracted and whom she was meeting on, as she saw it then, an even intellectual basis. Also, as she told me, he seemed an opportunity not to be scorned. For who was she? And behold him! (An inferiority complex, you see.) Besides, she was already twenty-one years old; her brother was beginning to tease her about being an old maid. So she passed over their intellectual differences and saw only the emotional harmony. And because of that, and because she did not want to give up her work—since her mother was now partly dependent on her—(although she had induced her also to take a library course so that eventually she might earn a living salary)—they entered on one of those long engagements which usually prove fatal. Delay is the dark room in which negatives are usually developed.

"Yet for me this was not difficult," confided Ernita, "since at that time I had no sex emotions to speak of. But with Leonard it was different. He was passionate, and worse because of repression somewhere was actually starved sexually, having had no sex experiences of any kind. It was sin, you see. Yet nature being what

it was,—a matter of primordial sinfulness which one concealed, he did the best he could. Only ours being a conventional and therefore moral as well as legal courtship, he felt freer to operate than might otherwise have been the case. In consequence, as I observed, and rather painfully (I being what I was at the time) his eagerness and haste seemed almost unnatural. For, as you must know, I was terribly shamed and disgusted from time to time by the several evidences of his to me almost animal excitation, and in consequence I would upbraid him until he would apologize in miserable humility."

Finally, finding her unwilling to marry him at the time or to satisfy him in any way, her lover hit upon a shrewd and most unministerial scheme to overcome her moral scruples. Since he could not afford marriage at the time, as he thought, they were to elope and keep the marriage a secret. He had a friend—a wild, romantic, young Irishman named Molloy—with whom he went about a good deal, and between Molloy and himself was concocted a plan. Or, mayhap, it was the devilish Molloy alone. At any rate, Molloy was to take a trip to Santa Cruz and there, because of his influence with certain local newspapermen, arrange for silence in regard to the marriage ceremony, which was to be performed once the pair arrived. And so, according to Ernita, and almost before she realized what was happening, she was standing in the study of an Episcopalian minister at Santa Cruz and being married. When it was

over she cried bitterly. Perhaps, subconsciously, as she said, some chemic intelligence within herself realized that it was all a mistake. At any rate a difficult relationship, painful to her because even then she had not gotten over the idea that there was something shameful about sex relations in general, doubly shameful when the relationship was secret, now began. To me, as she related all this, she insisted that she had no sensual desire at the time but submitted to her husband's passionate demands merely that he should not be unhappy. Indeed, to this wretched year of secret marriage she attributed a still greater development of her abnormal dislike of sex—always great and not until several years later, and under very different conditions, completely overcome.

At the same time, as America was being drawn further and further into the world conflict, the differences between these two as to the war became more and more serious—so much so as to result in a real mental split, which caused her to question Leonard's mental ability or force. And that was a dangerous, if not just then a fatal thing, since like most women, if she could not look up to and admire mentally the man she had married, she could no longer endure him. Only, as she now saw it, she was married now and what had been done could not well be undone.

Leonard's school term finished, he went down to his home near Santa Barbara for the summer. He was, as she said, an only son and devoted to his widowed

mother—a mother's pet. Ernita, as he planned and implored, was to follow and they were to be re-, or rather publicly, married. It was impossible, as she saw it now, to keep the marriage a secret any longer. Besides, her mother was now working in the library and so, economically at least, independent of her. Also the library staff, knowing much of Ernita and Leonard and their courting, was beginning to wonder concerning the long engagement. Also they had given her "showers" until every one was tired of the subject.

By then it was 1917 and America had entered the war. More, Ernita's feeling against it had reached such a level that she and Leonard were arguing by post. Not only that, but finally, and to her extreme disgust, he wrote that he was going to enlist—to help save the world for democracy. At once she wrote back that she wouldn't be a war bride; that she wouldn't go through with the marriage. He could choose between her and democracy—making the world safe for it or for her. Then telegrams. Was she mad? Did she really love him, or did she not? Did she really understand what she was doing? How could she take such a stand in the face of her country's great need? Had she no love of country —no patriotism? At any rate, would she not come and talk it over with him? In addition, his mother wrote that already the wedding guests were invited—Leonard's life would be ruined if she did not marry him. If he went to war she would take care of Ernita.

So after quite a struggle, Ernita finally decided that

since they were really married anyhow, she might as well see it through publicly. So one day she suddenly packed her trunk and departed for Santa Barbara, where they went through another ceremony, this time at Leonard's uncle's house. An imposing wedding as Ernita described it. The uncle happened to be a state official and in addition to inviting several brother officials took the American flag down from one of the city buildings and stretched it across the veranda. The customary official private use of public property, as it were. Afterward they went to a cottage on the shore belonging to Leonard's mother, she having gone on before and arranged everything in order, in addition to installing many new and pleasing things.

"She was so thoughtful," said Ernita. "I can still see the note she left on the kitchen table. 'Dear children:' —it read—'You'll find eggs and butter in the icebox, coffee and sugar in the cupboard. Be happy and DON'T ARGUE ABOUT THE WAR!' "

But the war was still a symbol of a real mental difference between them. Leonard was wrong and she was right, as she saw it. She was rabid on the subject.

"Indeed, long before Communism flashed into being in Russia," she told me, "I felt there should be some change somewhere—a new social order in which war would be obviated by social justice—some world union of the workers or the oppressed. Or why should not the suffering millions just quit and drive the wretched, strutting, little 'leaders' of the world into the trenches

and let them do the dying? Even before the war I had been troubled by the great extremes in American society, and this had finally set me over against the ruling classes. And now the war seemed to me to be proving how weak and meaningless was the individual, how used by forces and elements over which he had no control but which, instead, exercised the most malign power over him. Unquestionably I was much taken with the notion that man was free, or that he ought to be—a notion which I have since had to resign. Also that America could, and should, do a great deal to keep unsullied the freedom and honor to which originally, as I assumed, it had been dedicated. Naturally I blamed American bourgeois society for our part in the war, and I was yearning for some scheme or method by which I could register my deep opposition. But since I was only one, and in a region and state and nation that appeared to be thinking directly opposite to me, and all my husband's way, I quite despaired of any result for myself. Why, therefore, argue with him? Where could I get by it? Besides, just then I was very busy acknowledging wedding presents and didn't have much time for arguing."

She soon saw, however, as she said, that her husband was quite lost without these intellectual battles. They, as she now fancied, (and with no compliment to him involved), had given him a better opinion of himself than otherwise he might have entertained. And that was not helpful to love. At any rate, as soon as she

ceased to argue, he began to waver, and presently he was asking her what she thought concerning this or that point in connection with the war. She answered directly enough but without arguing, and not long after that he announced that he was going to look into things once he got back to college—things, incidentally, which she had been reading and arguing for for years.

And true enough, so he did. And so thoroughly that soon he became as violently opposed to the war as was Ernita—but not thereby raising himself in her estimation. For to her, as she said it all seemed too sudden,—a swift and violent conversion. She could not quite be sure that it was a reasoned and sound conclusion, or something in connection with herself—sex or a psychic supervision on her part—might not that have a great deal to do with it? However that was, later at Berkeley, to which they removed, both began going about with one radical person and another until soon they were joined up, mentally at least, as she said, with those who saw nothing but wrong in the war and its causes. First it was with The Peoples Council for Democracy and Peace—an organization very much watched and hounded at the time by the "hundred per-centers" who were all for the war as it was—and after that with the Socialist Party—a still more evil thing, as those around them saw it.

"For what can be worse in America than a radical?" questioned Ernita. "And how rapidly we fell in local respect! Indeed, in a political and social way, we were

now entering upon the stormiest days of our lives—a period which involved ostracism and social contempt. But do you think I cared? Rather I was glad and proud of it, defiant and unterrified. It seemed to me just then and particularly in so far as the present social orders on earth this side of Russia go, as though I were doing a clean and beautiful thing, and I still think so."

Just the same her mother was soon discharged from her position in the library because of alleged anti-war sentiments. Leonard, called to Chattanooga as trial minister of a Unitarian Church there, was promptly kicked out (in one month) because he held to his new socialistic faith and refused to make "an active pro-war campaign in order to build up the church." Followed notice to both to leave Berkeley—this from the Mobilized Women, a patriotic organization of the region. At the same time Leonard was denounced as a renegade from his religious views; Ernita as a crazy young radical. Their apartment and visitors became suspect and watched, and they themselves stood in continual danger of arrest. Ernita's mother, frightened by all this, proceeded to buy an acre in a poultry colony south of San Francisco, and to this mother, Ernita and husband removed with the intention of making a living that way. They called it "The Retreat," because it was not only a refuge for them but also for other radicals just out of jail or threatened with jail. And there they set about raising chickens, although Leonard, as Ernita said, was really not fitted for any kind of hard physical work.

And so poorly did they do that finally Ernita's brother had to come down and take charge while Leonard got a job with a religious publishing house in San Francisco.

By that time, though, the Russian Revolution had occurred—Ten Days that Shook the World—and to Ernita, as she said to me, this seemed a heaven-sent solution of all her social desires. The glory of Trotzky and Lenin! The theories of Marx! To free the world from capitalistic oppression! To lift the yoke from the neck of the common man! Soviet Russia seemed then to her the beacon light of liberty; the exemplar of a new and saving social faith. Her eyes turned to Moscow—to Lenin and Trotzky and their giant labors.

But at the same time, so swift was her sociologic thought at this time, she had already left the Socialist Party, having been drawn to it simply, as she said, because of its stand against the War and the economic principles upon which it based that stand. After joining it, as she said, she soon found the organization to be a fixed, dead thing, unable to satisfy her longing to plunge into active work against the capitalist order which, as she saw it then, was responsible for the war. So after that, and before the Soviet explosion, it was I-W-W-ism that had appealed to her as the most definite way in which to do something for mankind. She had quite naturally traveled from pacifism to socialism and an understanding of the class struggle, and from

the Socialist Party to the I.W.W., the most militant labor organization in America, and so from that, of course, to support of the Russian Revolution, not only because it was a revolt against an imperialistic war and meant the overthrow of Czarism but also because, as she understood it, it was a workers' revolution and the proletariat had established a dictatorship that was likely to succeed.

However, and strangely enough, as she explained to me in regard to all this, having become engrossed in the defense of members of the I. W. W., who were being arrested continually, she had missed completely the historic significance of the organization of the Communist Party in the United States in 1920—the party with which, because of her convictions, she really belonged, and which, had she known of it, she would have joined. Instead, it had seemed to her then that the most courageous and advanced elements in America were fighting with the I. W. W., when, as a matter of fact, the Left Wing of the very Socialist Party she had come to despise was joining the Communist Party.

"I did not realize," she said to me in regard to this, "that this American Branch of the Third International, which had arisen out of the victory of the Bolshevik Party in Russia, was the party with which I really wished to be."

At the same time, as she also explained, the People's Institute on Market Street in San Francisco was the center of anti-war, pro-Soviet Russia, socialist, anarchist,

and I. W. W. elements. Here were a workers' school, library, theater, and tea room run by emigrant Russians, mostly Jews. George Sterling and other literary lights came occasionally to their plays, and some of the more radical newspaper people, like Norman Springer, actually took part in them. Before the armistice the police were in the habit of raiding these headquarters looking for draft evaders. After the war the raids continued on one pretext or another, but always in the search for radicals—people who would not think as their fellow-Americans wished them to think. And it was of this institution, once she had joined the I. W. W., that Ernita became secretary and for which she worked day and night in its library, school, and theater. In fact, as she said, she was on fire with the nobility of the cause she had espoused.

It so happened, however, that not long after she became secretary, the business manager of the organization was arrested and tried under the Criminal Syndicalism Law, leaving Ernita alone to carry on the Institute. Next, the police, unable to crush the organization in any other way, condemned the building as unsafe for public meetings, which it was not, and so stopped activities there. It was then that Leonard suggested that she give up the work—for a time, anyhow—and stay home. He was, he complained—and truly enough, I suppose—leading a dog's life—no home life at all. He also complained that she did not care for him, but for a cause.

At that time, however, as Ernita assured me, she was in no mood for such arguments, and passionate as any crusader for the cause but nothing else, her husband included. "I really scorned domestic life," she said to me once. "I had been married three years and most determinedly still did not want to have a baby and settle down. Primarily opposed to motherhood, for myself, of course, I feared I would be tied down, my psychology of life changed, myself turned into a household drudge as were most of the women in moderate circumstances about me. A second, and subconscious, reason for my unrest was unquestionably my lack of love for my husband. I no longer really loved or respected him although I was not without sympathy for him in one way and another, and this manifested itself in constant phases of irritation which did not do away though with his never-failing tenderness to me. As I think of it now, it must have been that he was not sufficiently definite in his convictions, or at least not sufficiently strong to establish them against mine. At any rate, I felt myself to be mentally the stronger, and that irritated me."

Left without the Institute work she tried to get into trade union work, which seemed so essential in this class struggle. Next to the Institute, as she explained to me, was an art shop which made picture frames, book ends, and candlesticks to look like metal by applying plaster to wood—drawing the design while it was wet, sandpapering, and then putting on a coat of metal, and

polishing. And by degrees, and in order to continue in the labor world, she learned this process. But after a few weeks, and before she had been fully admitted into the picture framers' union, the plaster dust from her work had so affected her lungs that she had to give that up. Just at this time also she was informed by a friendly detective, who had conducted many raids on the Institute but had always left her alone, that a warrant had just been issued for her arrest on a charge of criminal syndicalism. This as she said appeared to her to be a little too much, since at the time and in her opinion there was nothing much left, in America at least, worth going to jail for—and particularly in connection with the Institute. Hence—she fled to "The Retreat."

But then another blow. For just at this time she found herself pregnant, for the second time, and worse, because of ill health unable to have an abortion. This made her terribly resentful, and as she said she proceeded to take her resentment out on her husband, who, as she knew, saw in a child the salvation of their married life.

"I used to look at him and think," she once said to me, " 'to imagine that you and a child of yours, and your needs and desires, should be considered by you as an offset to a passion for humanity in me or any one—to the welfare of millions, maybe!' "

But just the same along came the baby, and with it, not so very many weeks after, a day when Leonard

himself was badly injured in a motor accident. He had accepted an invitation to preach at a suburban church and after the services was walking down the highway toward the bus station when an automobile came up behind and struck him, breaking his hip. For ten weeks he was helpless in bed, and as Ernita saw it she simply had to put aside everything to take care of him. As for the baby, motherwise she devoted herself to it with the same conscientiousness that she applied to any labor. It was a passion for a time, even though she chafed under the realization that at a time when a new order was being born into the world in Russia, and when she so much desired to aid the world by joining with it—serving in some way—she was tied down in San Francisco to sordid domestic duties.

Later, though, when the baby was a little older, came the period of the organization by radicals in America (and especially, in so far as she was concerned, in San Francisco) of technical aid for Soviet Russia. And in regard to this as she explained: "I was aflame with opposition to the lying and yet smug policy of our government, which would permit it to say, as it did, that it was not doing one thing to interfere with the new Soviet power in Russia when at that very time it was really sending men and arms to 'protect our interests' and, incidentally, supplying the Japanese and British with arms wherewith to attack Russia. These facts I gathered from radicals, of course."

At this time, as she said, Leonard, sensing her un-

rest and fearing some erratic and troublesome (for him) move on her part, came forward with the suggestion that they both might help in this organization of technical aid for Russia since just at that time Lenin had authorized a call not only for aid, but the assembling in America of an engineering body composed entirely of Americans—which eventually was to take over a great mining and steel manufacturing project in Central Siberia (the Kuzbas Colony). In fact, as soon as possible this body was to sail for Russia. Hearing word to the effect that apart from principal technicians there would also be room for many minor workers, such as clerks, bookkeepers and secretaries, Ernita became wildly enthusiastic. Because of her experience in bookkeeping, stenography, typewriting and secretarial duties, she considered herself eminently suited to aid here. And Leonard, seeing how intensely interested she now was, with his usual astuteness and practical studiousness, began to study accounting in the evenings in order to be able to go with her—in case she did so decide—as an accountant. To be sure, neither she nor Leonard knew the language, but this was to be an American colony. And although there was to be no money at first—their expenses for the first year to be advanced by themselves—still she was wholly fixed upon going—wishing, as she said, to sacrifice at least something to the great cause. And on this as well as her account, Leonard was willing to go with her.

As for the baby, in the face of two grandmothers willing and anxious to take care of it, she saw no reason why she should not leave the child. She would not, as she slyly argued with herself—seeking to excuse herself as she said—be gone forever. Next, perhaps, and soon, the baby could be brought to Russia, or she would return. But mostly, though, she refused to think too closely as she said, because first there was an ethical problem here which she could not quite face or solve to her satisfaction, and next, because as yet the call had not come. But when they were thoroughly prepared—even with funds, saved or borrowed from Leonard's mother—and when the baby was a year and a half old, the call did come, to go to Kuzbas in Central Siberia.

"And then came the real trial," recounted Ernita. "For although I thought I had prepared myself, still when the time came I found it almost unbearably hard. I could not quite exculpate myself for deserting my baby. At the same time, there was the cause and the adventure. In this crisis it was Leonard's mother who insisted that we go and leave the baby with her. Always ready to stand by her son, whatever his beliefs, she was by now heart and soul in the cause because he was, not because she understood it in any way. And whether it was motherly of me or not, in this crisis it seemed to me that this was my opportunity, not only to escape from an unsatisfactory existence as a housewife but

to satisry my passion for service—to prove that a mother could do the world's work and still be a mother."

At this point it was that I called her attention to the fact that by her own admission she was not proving very much of a mother. To which she replied "Of course, I know that mixed with my enthusiasm for Russia was a certain percentage of desire to escape from a humdrum marriage with a man who was not up to my ideas of what a man should be. And it did not matter to me that our friends looked at me curiously and said that I was an unnatural mother, or that my mother, although she suffered in silence, made me feel that because of her lifelong rebellion against things as they are she might have carried me too far. I was on fire with this other idea, and while I suffered because of all this, still I went. And Leonard went with me."

But once on the way, as she described it, a burden seemed to drop from her shoulders. She seemed to be born again. She had prepared herself for hardships, so nothing seemed as bad to her as that which she had anticipated. Yet in Petrograd the first night they were compelled to sleep on the floor of an emigrant station, and later, because of the black bread and sausage they were forced to eat, the only food available at the time, she was very ill for a number of days. During all of this time, as she said, she lay in agony on a bed without springs or a mattress in a dismantled hotel without electricity or water, yet glorying in her service, useless though it then was.

"Worse, at midnight of the first or second night," as she told me, "a doctor and a nurse, each in a white apron and carrying a candle, came into the room where I with others, and all sick, were lying. And opening my eyes, in my very fevered state, I assumed that I must be dying and that this was the Russian custom of laying out the dead. But the hard-used doctor who was in attendance was so relieved at finding that I was not suffering from cholera that he wasted very little time on me, and in consequence I was not laid out, Russian style."

But that was but the beginning. This was August, 1922, and Russia's state was very bad. A famine was just about over, and there was no money, money having been abolished for labor or wage vouchers. Also, railroad conditions were frightful. It took this particular band of zealots two weeks by special train to reach Kemerovo in the Kuzbas Basin which is in the heart of Siberia. All the way, as Ernita pictured it to me, the stations were crowded with wretched people, ragged, hungry, often homeless and sick, and with them homeless and sick children, many of whom subsequently starved or died. Also, cholera was raging. At one station near Omsk the local officials put Ernita's party in quarantine for two days before they understood who they were. Again, later, the train was drawn up alongside a death house to which the bodies of cholera victims were being carried to be taken away on flat cars! And only vigorous protests to some local officials, who were

finally made to understand the aim of this expedition, caused the train to be moved. Again, some preventive sanitary order having been issued, these zealots were forbidden to use the toilets on their train and had to use indescribable places in the stations. Fortunately, they had their own kitchen car and their own cooks and—though not without friction at times—prepared the food they had brought along.

Ernita also described to me their arrival at Kemerovo which was as follows: "The mine side of the town was built up on the hills overlooking the River Tom, and the woods nearby were already turning red and gold. The chill and tang of autumn was already in the air. If it had not been for this unexpected natural beauty, I wonder if I could have endured it. But from the time I joined the delegates in New York I had been doing the secretarial work of the organization, and although most of it was petty detail I was only too happy to be occupied. In the colony itself was chaos—lack of housing, mismanagement, and disaffection among the members who had not expected such severities. Wisely enough, my husband had brought along one wide mattress, and on this, turned sidewise, he and I, as well as the chief engineer of the party, and his wife slept side by side for one month before other facilities could be provided. Dirt, cockroaches, bedbugs, bad cooking, discontent, disorganization, hostility on the part of an impoverished population, engendered by the White Russians who had been and still were running the industry—all

of these things were present, and none of them acceptable, and yet none of them discouraging to me. For at last, as I saw it, I was busy about the great work of bringing into the world a new and better order, concerning which so long I had dreamed. Better yet, I found myself much needed, which was heaven to me then. For had I not always abhorred domestic drudgery and here I was at last freed of it entirely, and this was unbelievably soothing to me. Not only that, but my dream of being free like a man to do the world's work, even though under such hardships, was coming true.

"But then," as she added, "came the winter—a real Russian winter,—snow, bitter winds, dry and yet piercing cold. The Russian management, more or less antagonistic because of the 'White' element still partially in control, made sure to give the American organization the worst part of the one big office building, and there it was so cold that we worked in our coats, felt boots, and fur hats. Also we worked long hours and received only the Russian 'pyok' or food ration which had been introduced during the war period of the Commune. This consisted of bread, potatoes, and a little meat."

Ernita, as she said, was at one and the same time secretary, typist, librarian, postmistress, timekeeper, assistant bookkeeper, etc., etc., and liked it. Better still, Leonard and she had a room in the best house in town, where the American engineers and technicians lived. But when they would come home in the evening from work or from supper, it was so cold

there that there was nothing to do but go to bed. And in such close quarters—working, eating and sleeping together—and in spite of her thought that with such an adventure as this her life with her husband would prove more bearable—her irritation with him grew. For he was there—and intellectually as irritating there as ever. And worse, or better, there were present a number of young American as well as foreign technicians, some of them handsome, defiant, and adventurous souls. And most of them, as she soon found, far from averse to affairs with their comrade women and some, because of their romantic attentions, caused her to view their respective merits in a most favorable way. And as much as she disliked to admit it to herself—and early morality or no early morality—she was, as she said, at the time at least, at last waking to the thought of the delight that might lie in companionship with at least one of the young engineers who happened to attract her at the time, mentally and in every other way. This change, as she said, had sufficient force to evoke in her many thoughts in regard to her own morality, or lack of it, her past views as well as her present. For had she not at one time—and that not so long before—been most militantly moral? And now this raised the question as to what morality was anyhow. And exactly how much did she or did she not owe to it, and why? Confused as well as shaken by this new situation, she found herself going over her own moral past. For years, as she said, she had been quarreling with Leonard and

others because of what she considered their unrestrained lower natures, and now here she was faced by related impulses within herself.

"I was spiritually troubled, I tell you," she said to me one day. "There were days and nights in which I took myself psychically in hand and asked myself how and in what way, if any, I was different from any whom in the past I had abused. I had done no 'wrong' as I saw 'wrong' then, but also I saw that secretly I now wished to do wrong."

But all this to no end intellectually or otherwise, since all it led to as she said, was the admission to herself that plainly she was not as she had thought she was. While living in a glass house she had been casting stones. She had objected to Leonard's sensuality, as she saw it now, but only because she really did not care for him. And so these thoughts were by no means agreeable. They were barbed with self-criticism, tipped with the poison of self-contempt. But did they cause her new impulses and desires to lessen? No, they did not, she said. Instead these grew sharper and sharper, stirring her to longings which she could not, as she now guessed, indefinitely endure. Nearer and nearer, as she explained to me, she drew to the young engineer, growing gayer and gayer in his company. And Leonard, still unchangingly in love with her, was quick enough to note this. But since she kept to appearances as much as possible, he could not quarrel with her, though by his manner he showed plainly enough

that he sensed the change in her. He appeared to be depressed and seemed to be losing his spirit.

But then in January 1925 the Soviet Government, more pleased than not with this American management, turned the industry over to the Americans, who in turn proceeded to oust the White Guard officials who had been gouging it since the revolution. Here by the way, in this region had been some of the bitterest fighting with Kolchak, and some of his men were still here. Leonard, under this new arrangement, was made head bookkeeper, but with no knowledge of the language the whole system was more or less of a jumble and a nightmare to him. Also, at this time, or a little later, and in accordance with the New Economic Plan (NEP) introduced by Lenin, the wage system—actual money instead of service slips—was introduced into this colony and so the die-hards and theorists of Pure Communism, of whom Leonard and Ernita made two, were compelled to see what they considered Pure Communism abandoned. And being rank theorists, more wildly enthusiastic than even the Russian Communists themselves, they proceeded to oppose the change as wrong, although Ernita, as she said to me, later publicly acknowledged that she had been sentimentally mistaken.

Yet another thing that caused trouble and ill feeling throughout these first two years—(for in such a colony one could not help taking sides)—was the conflict that broke out and raged between the American

Communists and the I. W. W. who originally had joined together to make this technical adventure. For, the Russian revolution over, the Russian Communists desired to be wholly constructive and not destructive, and they required constructive men—technicians and managers with business ability—(not strike leaders)—who not only wished to but were technically able to construct the new state whereas perhaps a third of the colony membership consisted of I. W. W. members who were actually nothing more than strike leaders and had no more conception of the great constructive ideas of Marx and Lenin than any child. Their idea was to blow up something, not to construct or preserve anything much, and here there was nothing to blow up.

Not only that, but on the American Organization Committee of the colony were two fighting I. W. W.'s, both strong fellows, who had done most of the American recruiting, and hence not easily to be disposed of. All had put their money into this Russian expedition and had come expecting to establish their idea of an industrial commonwealth. On the other hand, there were many who were not I. W. W.'s but Communists and heartily in sympathy with Lenin and his plan. Hence, war. The earliest complaint of the American I. W. W.'s, as Ernita said, was that there was a lack of democracy in the management—too much technical autocracy—and from the first they had insisted that the workers themselves should run the industry. But the workers were not technicians

or managers. They had no managerial sense,—hence could not manage. Their own leadership thus far, as she said, had demonstrated the utter impracticability of such a system or lack of one, as theirs. Their theory of management, as she explained it, included colony meetings to decide quite every technical as well as social point, and this gave rise to arguments, abuse, threats to blow some of the Russian engineers into the river, besides consuming endless time, until at last it was obvious to all but themselves that the situation was impossible and so ridiculous. So when the Russian government, after an investigation from Moscow, finally turned the industry over to the colony on condition that it be made prosperous or reassigned to the government, the new director, an able Hollander by the name of Rutgers, (who had secured for himself the support of all those in the community who were not I. W. W.'s), simply put an end to this foolishness by organizing the industry for work like any other industry under the laws of the Soviet Republic.

"But what a blow to my I. W. W. friends!" commented Ernita. "And to my own idealistic notions also! In San Francisco I had been in such close sympathy with the I. W. W. that here in Russia for some time I could not believe it possible that I could change or see things differently. Yet I did. Only, for sentimental reasons, I suppose, I still stuck with the I. W. W. group here in its conflict with the Communists. For as I argued in regard to the Soviet's

American and foreign supporters, even if they did happen to be theoretically right in this case, certainly they were a petty, bigoted lot and harder on these American I. W. W.'s than they needed to have been."

Nevertheless, the time came, as she said, when sympathy or no sympathy she could no longer stick with them. As she pictured them, they were too erratic, those I. W. W.'s—too little interested in real—and in the Russia of that day so necessary—constructive effort, too much concerned with their own rights and privileges or, if you will, freedom and democracy. And so at last she decided to break with them, not too sharply or openly but slowly and surely, and go over to the new management, which she felt sure would do more for Russia than ever they could or would.

But now Leonard, possibly because of his wife's leanings toward this more conservative group, and his doubts of her personal interest in him, maybe, sided with the I. W. W.'s against her. Their rough straightforwardness and courage doubtless, as she said, appealed to his sentimental nature. Always a good fighter for the under dog, as Ernita described him, he also liked being heroic.

"I think it dramatized himself to himself," was the way she put it. "But still," she added, "I must not be unfair, for there was honest bitterness in him at this time because of the treatment accorded these I. W. W.'s, who by then had gone on strike and were actually deprived of their 'pyok' or food ration. They

had demanded to be sent home, but Rutgers, the new director, was in Moscow at the time and the chief engineer, a Russian Communist, was afraid to take the responsibility for sending them back in the middle of the winter.

"I remember stopping at their barracks one evening with Leonard," she once said to me. "They still had some of their last month's 'pyok' left and were cooking on the typical Russian peasant brick stove. An inch of frost was on the small-paned bunk windows. Tobacco smoke—dirt—disorderly bunks. Also wild arguments. But on my part painful silence, due to my inability now to agree with their position—all the more painful because they were such fine, honest-to-God men. As in San Francisco in times past, we all sang 'Pie in the Sky,' but for me the old kick had gone out of it. I was sad, for now, as I saw, I was really no longer a 'Wobbly' but a Communist. And when I finally did desert them, they, too, were very sad. For there was gloom in defeat for them over there. But by spring almost all of them had cleared out and were making their way back to America or some other part of Russia."

And then it was that Leonard also wanted to go back. For, according to Ernita, having noted the attentions of the young engineer and fearing their import, perhaps he was troubled and perhaps hopeless in regard to his future relations with her. For, had he ever been able to control her? Besides, in America were his son and mother. But by then Ernita could not, as she said,

think of leaving. She was interested in more ways than one and gave as her excuse that she would not break her two-year contract, that she was needed here. And her opinion was that her husband believed her. But her dominating reason was, as she confided to me, that she had fallen in love. For among the young engineers was still the one who had interested her so much at first—and now more than ever. A Communist and a graduate of Cornell, his young, strong, somewhat dramatic personality appealed to her. There had been and still were many talks between them—about Communism, I-W-W-ism, the problems of Russia, the personalities of Lenin and Trotzky. He was interested in Lenin and his program and believed in him. He saw, or thought he saw, that if Russia, or for that matter this particular enterprise, was to succeed, it must be through strong, practical men, (practical in all but their romantic ideals), who would make sound and for them more or less unprofitable use of their time and ideas on behalf of Russia. And, as he pointed out, there were such men—Rutgers; Di Polchi, an Italian; Simpson, an American; Grvensing, a Finn—willing to work for almost nothing. The I. W. W.'s, he was sure, could not supply this self-sacrificing and disciplined support.

And since in his mind as well as in his curly hair and blue eyes Ernita saw beauty, devotion, practicality, she could not help but feel that the Communists were right, the I. W. W.'s wrong. And enchanted by the

prospects of this different life, she saw only, or at least too much, the value of what was being achieved here. Life at last was perfect. And in Siberia!

And then, or about this time, came news of the arrest in New York of the members of the New York Kuzbas Committee. America was going into action against Communism. And in this connection, Leonard, troubled by his life here and also anxious to see his boy and his mother again, proposed to Rutgers that he be sent back as a witness for the defense. And since witnesses were very much needed, this was agreed to. So in June of 1925, when Kemerovo was blooming in almost tropical luxuriance, he left, and to Ernita's great relief she was at last alone. Her romance with her young engineer was now free to blossom as best it could under the difficult conditions which this peculiar colony represented. And driven by desire, she shut her mind to inward psychic complaints or voices out of the past and opened her eyes to his.

"Love in Russia, or Siberia, and among these strange and to me always fascinating people!" wrote Ernita to me once—and in regard to this period of her life. "The difficulties of it materially—although psychically or morally there were none, for these people do not take life as we do. They see love and change in a fatalistic, and hence in a more resigned and indifferent way. Why quarrel with what happens, with what is? 'It happens'—is a common Russian phrase. 'It is'—another. Are you harried by a state which you cannot endure?

Get up and go! And why not? What harm? Some will die, of course, and some will mourn. But another will be born. And whether you go or stay, always some will die, or mourn. And so why grieve as to who is to be injured or who is to profit? Accept life as it is. Do as you are strongly impelled to do, and let whatever it is that makes life see to it that no harm follows. That is their philosophy, and I am sure that I do them no general injustice in so expressing it."

And so an untrammeled courtship on the part of the young engineer with Ernita listening, since even now, as she said, she was unable to break with the old ties. "I had to have time to think," she said. "And so for several months did nothing but talk to my love." But then, letters from Leonard in New York and later in San Francisco urging her to return home, and she was thrown in the opposite direction—into the arms of the young engineer, as it were. For, once Leonard had left her, he also apparently could not bear to think of the old ties being severed permanently. Sometimes, as she said, he painted bits of the old days, or of the baby, or of his need of her, that cut and burned. At other times he upbraided her. Yet here, on the other hand, was this new, strange, provoking, intriguing world and in addition this new love tie. Also her personal zest for a love that for the first time meant something to her. Also work. And personal freedom. And back in America, as she saw it, only household drudgery and slavery. She justified herself and her decision to give

herself to the engineer by choosing to believe, as she explained, that neither Leonard nor her child needed her, but wrote that she would take the child whenever he really did need her, though she would never take him away from his grandmother if she continued to want him. (A subterfuge, of course.)

And so passed another winter, and under conditions almost as trying as the first, as Ernita said, yet because of this passion, finally realized as free love, easily endurable. According to her picture of all this, Ernita lived in a little room in the huge, homely community house built by the colonists—a frame structure which she described as having such thin walls as to offer no stop to the slightest noises but rather if anything to magnify them. And yet—and at the same time to offer shelter to all of the bedbugs in the district. More, because of the limited housing facilities she was compelled to share this same not only with her own new love but also with a teacher whom she had known in San Francisco, a cultured woman no longer young but who, like Ernita, had also found her first romance here. Also and by degrees, and as trying or impossible as it may seem to some, these two finally reached an agreement—never clearly-worded yet thoroughly understood and practiced, which related to and governed time as well as space, for their respective romantic meetings. And so all four managed to be fairly happy in the midst of dirt, noise, and lack of privacy. Fortunately, the following spring, the two were allotted a

larger room in one of the newly-built and attractive little two-room log cabins on the edge of what Ernita described as a lovely wood near Kemerovo, where she insisted that she was unbelievably happy. Food—clothing—conveniences—what were such things? What other than romance (even here, where she had come, as she thought, to serve sacrificially) was important? The flash and flicker of temperaments intensely drawn to each other by responsive moods and dreams and the illusions of those newly in love, were all, or nearly all, that interested her at this time.

As was natural, during this time, her correspondence with her husband, as she said, reached the point where it was quite distracting. He was unhappy. He was in America and with his son and mother, but he was not with her. And now, as he wrote, he could not do without her. And she, as she now saw, could not do with him. It could mean only suffering and unrest for her. Torn between her love and freedom here and her older and still functioning conscience, she now began to pity Leonard and to feel conscience-stricken about her child. Hence, by the following summer, and in spite of her intense craving for her lover, she had actually decided to go back. For, as she now said to herself, what, after all, was free love? Dare one truly and finally break with one's sworn obligations? Was there anything to the marriage tie, really, or was there not? Sometimes, racked by these thoughts and Leonard's moaning letters, as she once confided to me—"I

walked the floor, suffering because of my mind—this unescapable Puritan conscience of mine."

One thing, though, a letter was a whole month on the way, either way, and so it was almost impossible to keep up with her own changing moods or Leonard's. For when she had about decided to leave her lover and, without mentioning him, of course, had so written her husband, he was answering one of her letters in which she had insisted that by no means was he to return to Russia—that it was useless—all was over between them. Or, again, when she was faintly intimating that possibly a reunion might be effected between them on some agreed terms, he was writing her that her last letter was final with him and that he was not coming. In the end, though, he always wrote that really he could not do without her—that she must let him come back. And her conscience continuing to scratch her she finally decided that she must.

One of the things that motivated her in this conclusion, though, was the temperament of her young engineer. He was, as she was beginning to find and as she told me, too young, too full of his own plans for the future; too incapable, with the natural restlessness of the young, of sensing the importance to her of his stability. In short, as it had begun to look by then, it was not deep love in his case, or she was not his true mate—if any man or woman can be said to have an enduringly passionate mate. Rather this particular passion, or ecstasy of love, or adoration, or what

you will, was in his case merely for a season. Hence the endless controversy with her husband, some of the details of which she had shared with her engineer, had opened the way for him eventually to hint that in case she wished it he did not wish to stand in the way of a reconciliation, a confession which was exactly what she did not want.

"But there are two sides to my story," said Ernita to me once. "My engineer had met Leonard and knew of my child. Perhaps besides he read things into my conduct which he could not like or endure. I will not venture to say. Nevertheless, those Siberian nights and days with him were wonderful! The walks and talks in the great winds and snows! Sometimes, even now, there is an ache so sharp that I dare not look back or remember too well. Another thing was that Rutgers, the director—and to her surprise and satisfaction idealistically—had by now fixed on her as a most valuable assistant. For in addition to taking dictation, keeping books, typing, filing, and answering correspondence, she was able to prepare specifications and lectures or papers from notes given her, and by the aid of which he or she could speak anywhere. This caused her to feel more secure than otherwise might have been the case. At any rate the two conditions or situations operated to cause her to permit Rutgers, who knew of and was interested in her situation, to finally cable Leonard suggesting that he come back with his mother and child and offering him a satisfactory position, since, as

he troubled to point to her if it was freedom that she was really seeking it would be easier for her to settle her marital troubles in free Siberia than in America.

Thus advised she wrote Leonard suggesting that he return and offering to make a compromise arrangement whereby while not actually living together they should have joint responsibility for the child. But to this he replied that he would not come unless she agreed to live with him. But that she said she could not, or would not do. The old life was dead. And the mere thought of it was grueling. And America, with all its conventional ways and thoughts, as she said, was, for her, dead also.

"But do not imagine that in those two years I did not serve the Soviet Government well!" said Ernita to me, once, "or my engineer either. We slaved. Cold was nothing. Poor food nothing. My dresses and furs were jokes—my underthings rags. But I did not care. For I was clothed by an ideal, fed by one, warmed by one. Truthfully I was a slave to the spirit and the dreams of Lenin as I understood them. He, and he alone, as I saw him—his eyes clear, his personal ambitions dead—was fighting one of the world's great fights. I think I loved Lenin after I came to know of him. I never saw him. I never even dared to go and look at his body in the little mausoleum in the Red Square in Moscow, for I knew I would cry."

But at the end of two years, her prince's contract

up, he decided to return to New York. There was a girl there, perhaps, as well as his parents, and a position as representative of the Moscow Government. None the less, so great was her infatuation, that Ernita went with him to Moscow, where for an additional month in his company she awaited Leonard's final decision in regard to her last proposition to him. This was that in case he decided not to return—as just a month before he had written her he would not—she would go back to America.

"Conscience, duty, or maybe mere resignation because of my own loss," is the way she explained this to me. "I offer no excuses."

Yet for one month in Moscow, before her prince charming left and after writing thus, she lived with him while he arranged for his trip. At the same time also, she found work in one of the great Communist international organizations then seeking to spread the Communist doctrine abroad. And again, as in Siberia, she was a man of all work—typist, librarian, reader, translator, even lecturer on occasion. And after more than two years in the wilds of Siberia, as she said, she found the cultural life of Moscow most stimulating and delightful.

But after her lover's departure for America, real loneliness. For by then there had been another shift of mood in regard to her husband. She could not and would not return to America. No. He must, or might, come to Russia, but never would she return to him there.

But in the meanwhile a wire from him asking should he come to Russia would she agree to live with him? Once more, as she said, and after two days of agonized thinking, she was compelled to cable him: "Cannot accept. Leaving for Siberia." Her reason for this last statement was not only a sudden revulsion against reunion in any form but also because Rutgers, then in Moscow, had urged her to go back to help in the office organization at a new mine which the enterprise had just taken over. And that for her spelled interesting work as well as a possible escape from her husband. For Rutgers had assured her that his need of her was great, and in the face of her troubled spirit Siberia, as she insisted, seemed like home. There once she had found freedom and love. There she had known her greatest happiness. So next day she left for Kemerovo, the scene of her so recent spirited liberty and bliss.

"It was in December," she told me, "and for the first time in Russia I traveled 'soft' "—(a term for first as opposed to second or third class). "By then many of the railroad lines had been reconditioned and there were first-, second- and third-class cars. Besides, the Kuzbas enterprise paid my fare."

Kemerovo when she arrived was deep in snow. Worse, her room-mate without permission had taken in her sweetheart and there was no other room available at the time. Conditions being what they were, Ernita accepted the situation and lived with them.

"They proved very kind to me," she said, "and in my wretched state even this seemed like home."

But now an additional cable from Leonard saying that he was coming! He could not stay away. She must receive him. And next, in February, a summons from the Communist organization in Moscow to return and work there. A Congress of the Central Committee of the Communist Party was about to he held and technical help was required. Russia being very poorly equipped in this way, and since by then she spoke and wrote Russian after a fashion, she was most valuable. So in spite of her previous decision not to live with him ever, she wired Leonard that she would meet him in Moscow.

And once there again, as once she described this period of her life to me, Moscow seemed very beautiful. The old palaces, the bright churches, the Kremlin, the Kitai Gorod! Jointly with a German girl who talked little else she was given one small room in the Lux, a large rambling hotelly sort of affair with communal kitchens and baths on every floor—the Communist International headquarters—where in spite of all her troubles, as she said, life seemed fairly livable. Her work in connection with the Party conference was exciting, as during the Plenum they worked in the Kremlin Palace and she met all of the notables of the Communist International and the Russian Party. (By then Lenin had died.)

But then again Leonard arrived, looking wan and

worried, as she said. But now, as he explained, he had really come because by the time her cable telling him that he should not come had reached him he had gone too far in his preparations for returning to her not to come on. Besides, as he indicated, he still hoped for the best in connection with her. Couldn't they agree, for the child's sake, on a future domestic existence together? Surely. Would it not be better so? Was this restless changefulness really worth while? But by now, as Ernita said, she was in no mood to be either weak or merciful. True enough, she had lost her lover, but also, as she said, she had lost all zest for the old life. And the closer Leonard's approach, the more wretched it had seemed. A living death, as she phrased it. Also, although she knew that her former indecision had been caused by her fear of hurting Leonard, none-the-less, and at the very worst possible time for Leonard, she now, as she said, chose to be firm.

"I don't know how I could have been so cruel," she mused once in my presence, and most regretfully. "He came, and I saw him, and while we did not quarrel, at last I set forth all that was in me against him—marriage, America, his beliefs—oh, I don't know what all! Also the fact that never, never, never could I or would I live with him. And in a few days he left again, alone, hopeless, to take the position in Siberia that Rutgers had previously promised him. And I, very much torn in my own mind, stayed on in Moscow, still feeling

that life should do something more for me. I might not deserve it, and again I might—but life being what it was, a game of chance, one might hope for anything. Besides, I still wished to work for Russia. It is so, all through life, that we deny things to others that we beg for ourselves. I have often thought of that. I was sorry for what I had to do, yet I felt only relief at Leonard's departure. Thoughts as to the old days, my baby, my general cruelty, maybe, only crept over me afterward. But they are still with me."

Yet in Kemerovo, and to her astonishment, as Ernita said, it presently appeared that Leonard had found another distrait soul, like himself, a young American woman who like Ernita apparently was taking this opportunity to free herself from an unsatisfactory husband in America. Only now, as she sniffed and, with a magnificent, and yet, as Ernita phrased it, "so human and customary inconsistency," Leonard was giving this other woman his moral support in her struggle, although in Ernita's case he had nothing but criticism to register. And by virtue of this support of his, in part at least, this woman had already obtained one of those quick Russian divorces and had gone to live with Leonard. Of course, as Ernita said, she knew nothing of this until later. She had only noticed that after leaving Moscow for Kemerovo it was not long before Leonard's letters became quite cheerful. Also that he did not trouble to hold her to her promise to at least

come to Kemerovo to see him when the Plenum was over.

But in July—and this without any planning on the part of Ernita—Leonard's mother and his boy arrived in Moscow. And for the sake of appearances as well as affection for her son, Ernita felt compelled, as she said, to secure a month's vacation and take both to Kemerovo. (Rutgers had provided a pleasant cottage, overlooking the river, for Leonard's mother and the child.) Only this, as she found afterwards, was a fatal move on her part. For, in her absence, Leonard had been getting along most happily with his new love and making headway against his old feeling for his wife, and all that her coming could do was to open old wounds. Besides, so loyal was he to the old tie that he was still hoping, as she found on her arrival, that she would return to him. But as yet not saying anything to the other woman, even spending nights with her while by day he was about trying to persuade Ernita to come back to him.

Yet because of Leonard's mother and child as well as a good job waiting for her in Rutgers' employ, and because she did not yet know of the other woman, she had *just about,* as she phrased it, finally decided to stay and make the best of him, when something happened that caused her to change her mind. For one day, her roommate—the same one with whom she had first lived after Leonard's return to America—suddenly began to upbraid her for interfering with Leonard when

she no longer cared for him and when at last he had found an opportunity to be happy. "She even denounced me," exclaimed Ernita, "as a hard and selfish woman, who did not want Leonard for myself yet would not let him be happy with another. Dumbfounded, as I was," she said, "and made furious because of Leonard's deception in regard to this, I sent for him, but received instead the lady, who had intercepted my note."

And then the interview that followed! The epithets and characterizations of herself indulged in! Ernita smiled at the recollection of it all. But by then, she said, she had realized fully the anomalous as well as unintentionally cruel situation in which her return had placed this other woman. And was sorry. For how could it look otherwise than that she had come to injure her? Even to speak in her own defense, as she explained to me, meant not only harm to Leonard but to this woman, for whom she was so sorry. For then, of course, this woman would see how little Leonard really did care for her and that might cause her to turn on him. Intensely troubled, as she said, she decided to make a superhuman effort to save the situation for Leonard, because whatever happened to her, she wanted him to have some one. And so that evening at sunset, when the river was loveliest, she sat with the two of them on the bank of the Tom and lied heroically for him until his mistress finally believed

as she wanted to believe—that Ernita had been jealous and trying to get him back.

But to mend matters as speedily as possible, the next day even, she and Leonard drove in a dilapidated old droshky to a village some twenty versts away, where in an old schoolhouse the Soviet Court of the region was sitting. And there, with the whole village population sitting about on the benches and crowding in at the doorway, they applied for a divorce. And in twenty minutes, as such things then went in Russia, it was granted. Since then the period of time required has been extended to two weeks.

"Then jointly we paid the fee of eight roubles," she laughed, "and arm in arm walked down an avenue of whispering and smiling villagers more like a newly married couple than divorcees."

Nothing was then left for her, as she said, save to go away. Leonard's mother, knowing only the other woman's side of the story, favored her and was disgusted with Ernita's conduct. She herself was ashamed of her long sentimental and, as she now saw, useless variability in regard to all this.

"I felt that if I could just slip away that night, they might still be happy in Siberia," she said. "It was hard to think of leaving my boy. We had just gotten acquainted all over again. Just the same, the next day at sunset I boarded a train for the next junction, Topki, on the way to Moscow. And of all those I knew, only Leonard saw me off. And now, worse luck, he was

not only tender but sorrowful. And after that, that ride in the packed, fourth-class car, in the gathering darkness toward Moscow, was the saddest of my life. Oh, how sad! Never had I felt so totally alone, unloved, misunderstood. I cried forlornly in the darkness, but no one noticed, and that was something."

Back in Moscow, she said, life once more became interesting. For there she worked in the library of the Comintern, and while there were many difficulties with her Russian fellow-workers in her efforts to introduce American methods, nevertheless Moscow itself was thrilling and intellectually stimulating. For soon, as she said, she found a young Irish woman friend, attractive, witty, full of a comforting blague and together from then on they shared everything—room, bed, past and present troubles. By degrees, as she said, she found herself interesting herself in the theater, and finally wrote up the Moscow winter season for the American Communist press.

But then after a year in Kemerovo, Leonard went to some other city in Russia to teach while his mother went to Denmark to attend an International Communist school there, leaving the boy with Ernita. The other woman, as Leonard was now reporting, was leaving for America. She had tired of him. But Ernita now had a hard struggle to get along as Leonard was unable to contribute much if anything to the support of their child. To make matters worse, Rutgers now gave over the Kuzbas management to a Russian director, who,

jealous of the Americans, immediately proceeded to install his own specialists in their places.

Shortly after this, and as I learned from other sources—not from Ernita—a great scandal centered around her in connection with the new commercial director of Kuzbas—a Georgian—then officially resident in Moscow. It appears, as I was told, that she had gone to him for some money owing her by the enterprise. Immediately on seeing her for the first time, he found himself so interested that he could not accept a refusal of her interest in him, and proceeded, without encouragement on her part, to attack her. Naturally, she felt herself shamefully dealt with, and immediately after ventured to complain to a famous and powerful woman Communist,. who, whether Ernita would or not, insisted on action. There followed a trial, a conviction, almost an official execution. However, Ernita begged for a modification of the sentence imposed and secured it. But the man received a four-year sentence.

Then in the spring of 1927, more trouble. Leonard was shot by bandits in Tomsk, and his right arm paralyzed. At once he came to Ernita in Moscow, where she took him into her room and cared for him. Afterwards, with their boy, he went to Berlin to meet his mother, and from there to France for a rest. But later, when he tried to return to continue his work in Tomsk, and in spite of any influence Ernita could bring to bear, he was refused a visé by the Russian Government. (The ways of the G. P. U.—secret police!) This

final blow, after his many cruel defeats, depressed him so that he all but took his life. But later he managed to obtain a position in England and so left for there.

When I last saw Ernita in Russia, which is where this portrait had its birth, there was still much to darken her mood. For she was one who had grown almost too fast intellectually, and while still strong in the Communist faith and all that it meant in the way of freedom for women, she was no longer one who was convinced that it was without faults or that it would not need modification and strengthening in various ways. Besides, her old sureness as to her own virtues and worth had been greatly shaken. As I saw it, she needed rest, a change, some emotional connection which for all her faith in the necessity for freedom for women would ensure her at least a little affectionate stability. She craved deeply, of course, some one whom she could permanently respect as well as love. Yet is there such an one for any? Or such a state for any two?

Yet in Russia, as I saw it, one may do much, And despite various ills then and afterward, Ernita had decided to stay, because, as she explained it to me, she had learned that life is a dangerous, changeful, beautiful and yet deceiving thing, good or worth while or not as chances aid one, yet always fairly endurable even at its worst. Besides, as she once said to me, and with a courageous smile: "In my youth and zealotry I had imagined that Communism could and would

change the very nature of man—make him better, kinder, a real brother to his fellows. Now I am not sure that Communism can do that. But at any rate it can improve the social organization of man some and for that I am still willing to work."

ALBERTINE

Foreword

THE following is neither more nor less than the romantic and very intimate confidings of an American sculptor of some standing in his day, who because of his interest in me and my work, seemed to feel that I ought to know. He craved always dramatic realism and sought to inspire it in others. And because of his keen wish that something be done with his story, I do not hesitate—now that he is dead these six years past—to reconstruct from the many details with which he provided me the following portrait of Albertine, which holds me quite as much as some of the more personal pictures that relate to myself. As you may well guess, not only the character details, but some of the principal places and illuminating incidents are most thoroughly disguised. None the less, being *quite like,* they make a portrait that is true.

THE AUTHOR.

Albertine

A GIRL of the Diana rather than the Hebe or Aphrodite type, Albertine interested me from the first not only by her statuesque, reserved and apparently remote beauty, but also by a certain quiescence of body and mind which sprang from genuine understanding and taste and was as composing and soothing to my frequently ruffled temper as anything in life may well be. For it was always restful where Albertine was—city, seashore, mountains, plains. Indeed, sea, sky, forest, silence, seemed reflected betimes by her temperament, moods and understanding, even by the dignity and poise of her presence. She never wasted or deflected her energy in either intense excitement or reducing morbidity, but was chiefly calm and thoughtful, and by instinct rather than by any marked study that I could discover had early harvested much of what we mean by wisdom.

It was through Olga, as I recall it now, that I first met Albertine. This was at an afternoon piano recital in the lesser auditorium of Carnegie Hall. She had joined our box party to chat for a few moments during the intermission. At once I noticed the pointed oval of her face; the thickness and smoothness of the yellowish-brown hair above the foggy gray eyes; the sensu-

ous, clinging grace of her body; the length of her thin, supple fingers. She wore no jewelry; a silver fox lay loosely about her throat. After commenting on the soloist, her talk ran to persons known to most of those present but—a friend was coming on from the west; a sister of hers had become engaged; her husband had just been called to California on business.

I wondered about her and her life, afterward, and finally questioned Olga. The story that she told me—confirmed by many conversations with Albertine through subsequent years of contact—almost twenty—interested me not a little. Although poised and serene at say twenty-three or four, she was, none the less, the eldest child of a poor and domestically turbulent family, which had lived in a little tatterdemalion house in lower Jersey City opposite the Communipaw Station of the Jersey Central. Her father, as Albertine herself much later (and most tolerantly) explained to me, was an eccentric and an associate of eccentrics and ne'er-do-wells. When he worked, which was seldom, he did painting and cabinet-making, but he believed that his true vocation lay in the direction of music or the stage. He played the violin fairly well and read much, principally the classics. But being of a fiery as well as semi-artistic turn, he was quick to take umbrage, often without any real reason, at what he considered dark, sly and most undutiful slights on the part of his comparatively large family. In reality, as Albertine pointed out, all of the seven children stood in constant awe of

him. Worse, he frequently got drunk and not only refused to work but sank into the most somber and growling of moods, remaining about the house at such times and criticizing the conduct of his family.

Still worse, despite his dubious and self-approved learning, he was in no particular earnest that his children should acquire any. On the contrary, they were to go to work at an early age (as he invariably claimed he had), and so help make the home of which he was the dominating spirit the easy, comfortable thing that it should be—for him. In consequence, Albertine, being the eldest, and in the face of her mother's defensive tactics and tears, was compelled, and this at the age of fourteen, to step out and seek work. There were so many children and they had such wretched clothes. Her two younger brothers, she said, were so poorly clothed that they were ashamed to attend school, and the next youngest sister was already complaining that other girls ignored her and her brothers as being too low in the social scale.

The first and only work she obtained was in a paper box factory. For she was so attractive and different—so very attractive and different, as I can well guess—that within a week, and although she was but fourteen and had scarcely mastered the art of making a box, the floor manager, and later the proprietor himself, making their rounds, noticed her and stopped to talk with her. How old was she? Where did she live? What did her father do? And by the proprietor, who was fifty-

five, German, and very dictatorial if not exactly aggressive in her case, she was asked one day if she knew anything about bookkeeping.

She did not.

Just the same, and all things considered, he then and there announced that it would be as well if she would come to the office and have some one show her how to keep books, or at least one book. They needed an assistant in that department. More, once she was installed there, as she related to me, her elderly employer came around and exchanged a few words with her. How was she getting along? Did she like the work? (No comments concerning any of the mistakes she was sure she had made.) Then passing her in the factory hall one day he paused to say that he hoped she was still happy in her new work. She said that she was, whereupon he queried concerning a little drive in the country on Sunday afternoon. (He was a widower, his wife having died three years before.)

"But the thought of my father—what he would do if he found out—as well as the age and dignity of my admirer, overawed and frightened me," Albertine once explained to me. "I think I must have showed my trepidation in some way, for he touched my arm as if to reassure me, said he was not so bad, even if he was my employer, and he would talk of it another time. And after that he showered me with attention, and finally asked me to marry him."

"Well, why didn't you?" I asked her.

"Because I was more romantic than I am now. I thought of any one over fifty as very old, impossible, like my father." And she laughed. "But just the same, I did like him a little, or maybe I felt a little sorry for him. Mostly though, I was thinking of a boy, or just boys."

Meanwhile, as she also related, there had appeared on the scene just about this time the individual who three years later was to become her husband. And what a husband! Since I came to know him very well, I can describe him. Small—that is, no taller than herself—dark, handsome, lithe, alert, close-knit physically, with an easy, offhand, genial and disarming manner, yet which same could most easily and swiftly become aloof or evasive or intimate and confidential as the financial or other values prevailing might warrant. Indeed, he possessed as shrewd and non-moral and non-altruistic a brain as I have ever encountered. No wonder that in his chosen field—which eventually related to furnishing and decoration in the grand manner and objects of art the prices of which ran into millions—he became very wealthy and that his establishment came to be regarded as the most significant and exclusive of its kind in America. "Designed" or "Furnished" or "Decorated" *by Millerton!* What marked distinction accompanied that name! Its very lettering, even, in an oval of carved roses above the door of his salons in upper Fifth Avenue! Exteriorly no suggestion of a shop; rather of a private residence, with two tall, narrow,

oval-arched and closely-curtained windows in front, shadows and harmony within. And Millerton himself rarely to be seen—only associates and assistants.

But all that was long after Albertine first saw him, and quite long—almost fifteen years—after I met him.

"When I first saw Phil," Albertine once confided to me, "he was on his knees arranging ties and socks and gloves in the window of a Jersey City haberdasher's shop, but not too intent upon his artistic labors to look out occasionally and 'make eyes' at the passing girls, I can assure you!"

To which Millerton, present and listening, retorted: "But just once, my dear, and only at you, you know."

"Uh-huh? Yes?" was Albertine's dry comment.

None the less, there he was that first time—if one was to believe her—a spindling slip of a window-dresser, earning the munificent sum of twenty-five dollars weekly, and to be observed occasionally between seven and eight in the morning when she was on her way to the factory or between five and six in the evening when she was returning home. A little troubled at the time by the overtures of her elderly employer as well as the state of her family, for conditions in her home were decidedly distressing, she did not connect herself with Millerton or his looks in any way. Rather, as she narrated, her thoughts were principally upon her mother whom she greatly loved and by weight of connection on her father, also, who was loafing and drinking and occasionally threatening her

mother with a beating. More than once Albertine had had to interfere, threatening to complain to the police as well as his labor union. More, as regards her brothers and sisters, it looked then as though they also were growing up merely to be sent out into the same factory world as herself. Naturally, therefore, the elderly manufacturer, with his hints of ease and luxury for her in case she chose to accept him, loomed large, if colorless, when lo, here was this dapper window-dresser, on his knees, his shirt-sleevs held up by bright brown elastic bands designed to match his trousers and belt! And smiling and "making eyes"! ("I did not!" "You did so!")

Nevertheless, though she looked and smiled in return, she did not think of him as any solution to her problem, she said, but merely as an attractive somebody who might become interested in her if opportunity were afforded him. For she had already half decided, because of her family and her looks, that she could not afford to marry a poor man, and certainly none such as this.

Passed several days, and then one evening Millerton coming out of the store and hailing her as she was passing. He had been waiting. And would she not permit him to introduce himself, walk home with her?

"I could not help but be attracted to him," she told me, "in spite of all my dark thoughts. He was too good-looking and so high-spirited. I never saw such a nervy, cool person! Besides, as I came to know him better,

I was intrigued by his resourcefulness and self-confidence. He always seemed so sure of his future, what he was going to do—which was at that time, first, to get a position with a rival window-dressing concern that paid more, then save money and in the not too distant future go into window-dressing on his own." She laughed as she always did when she contrasted his early ambition with his later station and wealth.

A thing that also interested her, she said, was his obvious faculty for making money on the side. Before she had known him a month, he was talking of a half interest in a little haberdashery shop which he and a younger brother were to open in Newark and for which one of her brothers might work. Another tactful thing he did was to take her to visit his family, which was somewhat better placed than hers. And incidentally, through an uncle of Millerton's who owned a motor car, Albertine and her sisters and brothers were soon introduced to a slightly more colorful existence than hitherto they had known—not more money but more entertainment.

Naturally, such tactics, since he was also personally attractive to her, dissuaded Albertine from her mood in regard to her employer. For now, listening to Millerton—or Phil, as she was accustomed to call him —she began to believe that he might have a worthwhile future. His head was always so full of schemes for getting on. Even then, as she said, he was talking of learning more about furnishing and interior decora-

tion, since somebody (as he himself once told me) had pointed out that window-dressing was really a specialized branch of the decorating art, and that if he wanted to follow up such a line of work, he would do well to look into some of the decorative art magazines and maybe connect himself with a school or firm which dealt in fine furniture and expensive decoration. And this, as he now confided to Albertine, he was proceeding to do. He had not very much money to spare, but he subscribed to the best magazines, studying them at night. Next, he applied to several of the important decorating houses for a connection.

Finally, after six months of waiting, he landed a small salary and commission job in the rug department of one of the large New York department stores which also boasted a decorating section of which this rug department was an adjunct. And here, so great was his taste or his personal charm or magnetism, combined with his persuasive powers—and I can testify to all—that presently he was earning almost double his salary in commissions. This fact so impressed the financial management of the store that he was promoted to an assistant-managership of the home decorating section. And later he was called to the management of a larger department in a Fifth Avenue store, where he came in contact with types of customers entirely new to him and who were destined to formulate as well as enlarge his own taste and capacity in every direction, providing him eventually with not only the

introductions but the incentive and the means to develop such artistic resources and judgments as then centered in him.

But before this time he had already persuaded Albertine to marry him, since his then position paid forty-five dollars a week. And there was a child in prospect—which died in six months. First they went to live in a small apartment in Jersey City, which later, as his skill and salary grew, they deserted for a larger one in the then commonplace upper west side region of New York City. Here, a year or two later, a boy was born to them. A little later—when Phil had become chief of the designing department of one of the great Fifth Avenue decorating establishments—he selected an apartment in the lower Seventies near West End Avenue—which was where I first visited Albertine.

Still later—about a year or so—he met one Oakley Cloyd, a society man turned decorator and with, as Phil once said to me, the most valuable social connections in New York but lacking the commercial sense or skill to turn them to profitable use. Aware of this lack, Cloyd immediately saw in Millerton a solution to all of his problems and made him his assistant. And it wasn't very long before he was relying on Phil for this and that and taking off more and more time to go to Newport or Bar Harbor or Palm Beach while Phil stayed home and took care of things. Oh, yes, indeed, Cloyd had found the right man at last—his fate or his finish—for inside of ten years Phil Millerton

owned Cloyd—business, friendship, loyalties, all. In short, he *was* Cloyd & Company! It was only after Cloyd's sudden death at fifty-six that Phil incorporated as Millerton, Ltd.

But this was not his stature at the time I met his wife at the concert. While connected with Cloyd, he had not yet reached the partnership stage. But he was working quite consciously toward it, as I later discovered along with other details when, via Olga (who, as I have said, was a close friend of Albertine's) I was invited to dinner at the Millertons'. I recall being impressed on that first visit by the taste displayed in the furnishing of their not too large place—the design of the furniture, the paucity but beauty, and in several instances rarity, of the objects of art; the well-chosen books and magazines on art, architecture, decoration, town and country social life, as well as any number of volumes on the history and development of arts and decoration in foreign lands. I gathered that Millerton was a keen student of all of the branches of his calling, since not a few of the books and magazines were then and there lying about open and with passages marked.

My second impression of Albertine on meeting her again was that she was even more lovely than at the concert. In a close-fitting pearl-white evening gown, her rounded arms and upper bosom bare, she moved about fully conscious of her charm, though a little too reserved, I thought. For so frequently she merely

looked and smiled faintly. Later I decided that her reserve was less of a manner than a condition, for she had a smile and a look at times which conveyed more than words, and what she did say exhibited a tolerant understanding and awareness of quite all that was said or referred to. I found her well-informed in art, literature and music; also that she and her husband were personally in touch with a number of celebrities who were far from dull mentally or in any other way. None the less, on this occasion, her aloofness troubled me. I could not tell whether she disliked me or whether I was merely failing to make an impression of any kind.

On the other hand, and without much willing or effort on my part, Millerton and I soon became quite chummy. For we were both interested in art, and he was the sort of person who enjoyed to jest—or "kid," as we say—and better yet as I saw not to take either himself, his work or this electro-chemical scene any too seriously. Rather, he was naturally at once an agnostic and a pagan accepting only such commercial and social rules as were unavoidable and yet always exhibiting a courtesy and cordiality if not exactly loyalty to any that was enticing to a degree. In short, I have never known any one who did not like Millerton. He was a man who at once made and used friends, returning their use and aid with either practical tips or benefits of one kind or another or if not with those then with the most ingratiating of smiles.

At once, and because of a notorious art smuggling exposé rampant in the newspapers at that time, we fell to discussing luxury and taste in America, and he made the, to me very shrewd, observation that America was just then awakening to an interest in luxury but didn't know very much about it or about furnishing and decoration either. Hence, it could be sold almost anything. And he illustrated his point by one or two amusing stories concerning aspiring art collectors (multi-millionaires) who were being robbed by this and that method or fake article, and then added—(a searching conclusion, I thought)—that to lead in his field in America, one had to guide. I decided then and there that I was talking to an opportunist, optimist though he might be, a man who knew what he wanted and was fairly confident of his ability to obtain it.

Presently he was telling me of his connection with Cloyd, which he had decided would prove very valuable in the course of time. Cloyd, as I have said, had social connections, background, whereas he himself had nothing as yet. *But*—his smile and eyes seemed to say! My final conclusion was that this man was so clear-cut and resourceful that he could not possibly fail at anything he undertook. Life, wealth, this, that —all were taken with a grain of salt. It was at once fun to work and to play. Most people took life too seriously but he was not going to be one of them. I smiled and liked him the more.

But Albertine. She was so attractive and yet re-

strained and apparently convinced that this home life—the pleasure and direction of her husband's home—though after all not much, was really all that was in store for her. I wondered, and occasionally found myself looking at her across the dinner table. And then a comment that she once made interested me very much. "Phil looks on me as a home fixture," she said, smiling at him, "but he really doesn't know what I do or where I am. He is so busy!"

"Oh, don't I?" was his dry reply. And they looked at each other amusedly, though not without affection. (About a year later Albertine confessed to me that she never quite knew whether Phil troubled to keep track of her. "But he has so many people working for him," she added, "and they are about most of the places I go to—the theater, the opera, concerts, restaurants.")

But it was that first remark that set me to thinking about her in connection with her husband and myself. For she was so really attractive. And then Olga, on our way home from this first visit, saw fit to air certain conclusions in regard to the Millertons which gave me more to think about in this connection. Phil Millerton she painted as having no ideals beyond money or purely material and maybe social success. (The latter she could not be sure of; he seemed centered too definitely on sheer material means.)

"Perhaps that's because, like Al,"—she was speaking of Albertine—"he had so little as a boy. His father died when he was only eleven, you know, and there were

five children, so he had to go to work. First he sold newspapers, then he was a messenger boy, then he clerked, and I don't know what else. But there is one admirable thing about him. He is absolutely devoted to Al and her family and his. Since he's moved to New York and gotten this start with Cloyd, he's put both families into better houses and gotten the boys good positions, and now he and Al are inviting them everywhere so as to give the young people an opportunity to meet better people than they could meet in their own circles."

And this certainly proved to be true of this anomaly in the shape of a man. For money, while it appeared to be an end with him, a wholly worthy objective, was not regarded in any miserly or selfish sense. It was money to do with for others, apparently—Al's family and his and their own joint futures. I have never known another case quite like his. I think he lived for business, for at night in his home, and even if he came home as late as eight or nine o'clock or entertained a few of his customers or fellow-schemers in his field at dinner, he was sure to retire afterward to a little den or office and work or study until two or three in the morning, reading up on museums and collections and studying new methods of obtaining and transporting and selling to the then rapidly multiplying army of wealthy men in all parts of America some of the glorious art loot of the world. I have looked in on him often at midnight in his little chamber, his catalogues

and papers and volumes about him, and smiled at a devotion which was really not wholly prompted by a love of art in the last analysis but rather a love of money, or the power and position, freedom to do and be which money, as he saw it, was certain eventually to obtain for him.

But this, as Olga now troubled to make clear to me, was exactly where the shoe pinched and the rub was. He was, she admitted, the most studious and self-educated person she had ever known. But on this account, much too unconscious of, if not exactly indifferent to the obvious charms and merits of his wife.

"Why, he works night and day! It's a wonder he doesn't have a breakdown! And Al, too!" Olga's tone was almost angry. "He never seems to think about anything except business any more. He's become so self-centered that he's begun to neglect Al shamefully, although I don't believe he realizes it. He's up and off to the office before eight and he's never in time for dinner. And how Al hates that when there are guests! More often than not when she arranges for a dinner or a show or a concert, he calls up at seven or half past or a quarter to eight and explains that he can't make it and that she's to go with some one else."

And true to her picture, I recalled that Millerton had been delayed in arriving this very evening. He had telephoned, so Albertine explained, that he was going to be a little late, not more than a half hour. And in about that time he did arrive, a little hurried-looking

but so exceedingly brisk and engaging that one had to forgive him.

"You see," continued Olga, "Al isn't material like Phil. She's younger than he is by six years and she isn't practical the way he is. She likes some money for herself and her family, of course, but she doesn't like to see him devote all his time to getting it. And if trouble ever comes, that will be the reason for it. It hurts Al terribly, I know, though I believe she's becoming more or less resigned. He's been doing it, you know, ever since they got married.

"But that doesn't mean that he's really indifferent or unfaithful," she hastened to reassure me. "As a matter of fact, I know he cares for Al as much as he can care for any one, and it's for life with him. He never thinks of another woman. I know he likes me, but I have never been able to get him to make a sign. Besides, he gives Al absolutely everything she wants that he can afford. You see how she dresses and how their home looks. She has all the servants she needs. Next week she's to have a new car, and he's planning a place on Long Island for the summer. He's really crazy about her, and she knows it, but he's so wrapped up in his work that he takes her for granted, and when she complains he says it's all for the future. But Al says she's young now, and if this goes on, she won't be. And I know they quarrel about it at times."

I began to understand a certain wistfulness, a far-away look in Albertine's eyes. And now, because of

Olga's delineation of the state of this family, its past and present, as well as the charm of Albertine and the force and ability of her husband, I became interested on my own account. Besides, since Albertine was fond of Olga and had sensed her interest in me, she very soon fell into the habit of inviting us—to tea, to dinner, to the theater or a concert. And soon it was no uncommon thing for us to find ourselves together—with Millerton usually absent. But also I noticed that we made out quite well without him.

Then one afternoon—but this was months afterward, by the way, and when Albertine and Phil and I had become most friendly— I found myself alone with Albertine. Olga—who had numerous musical affiliations (was a fine pianist herself)—had promised to bring a certain violinist to tea at Albertine's, but neither had appeared. It was a late January afternoon, I remember. Later Olga telephoned why. But so it was that at last Albertine faced me alone and apparently as serenely as ever. And presently, as I had come to expect in connection with Millerton, he telephoned that he could not get home in time for dinner.

"But Mr. Berenson is here," I heard her say. His answer I did not hear.

Presently she rejoined me, and with a something in her voice or manner, or both—I can scarcely recall the exact shade of mood—said: "Well, then you and I will have dinner together alone. Do you mind?"

"I? Mind?" I smiled.

But perhaps I should say here that during the months that had elapsed since first I had been a dinner guest here, I had come to regard Albertine more interestedly and personally. She had expressed her admiration for some of my sculptures, and we had talked of my work and my attitude toward life. She invited such confidences, since she was so kindly and wisely intelligent and understanding, so serenely and beautifully poised at all times. If ever Albertine gets a great deal of money, I often thought, she will make a graceful and tasteful use of it, may even enter society if Phil should change or she should marry again. She had an air and a way, a superior air and way. Also a discriminating taste in the arts. I recall some of the attractive bits of furniture harmoniously placed in her living room. There was a lovely Cyprian bronze mirror for one thing; an old Spanish chest (in which she said she stored her linens), and a tapestry or two. And she loved music, and from the point of view of a combination of society and music, opera. She was one of the few persons I knew who made a sharp distinction here, and at a time when grand opera, with all of its racket and maladjustments of temperaments to music, was still considered by the public as the *summum bonum* of all musical good. As for her literary taste, she preferred Hardy, France, George Moore, Henry James. But how was she to read, she complained, with Phil, during the last three years at least, continually bringing people home to dinner, mostly for business

reasons, and to be entertained afterward at the theater or a night club? And all this to be done "right"!

"At first I found it hard," she explained to me, "because I tried to do too much myself. Then I decided that my looks were more important to Phil than my physical services, so I made him pay for a Japanese cook and an English butler. Now my only complaint is that half the time when I have everything prepared perfectly, neither he nor his guests appear." She looked at me oddly as she said this, with an indescribable lift of her long, almost level, eyebrows. "But I am getting used to it," and she smiled, a little sadly. "Six years have taught me a lot. And Phil's really a wonderful man. But I do wish he could think of something besides business."

But during the period referred to there had been certain little things which related just to us. Once I recall—oh, the second or third visit—it was before or after dinner, I forget which. Olga was playing the piano, and beautifully. Phil was smoking a cigar and reading—the Encyclopedia Britannica or a book on art. Albertine was about to enter the room, when arrested by something lovely in the music, she paused to lean against one of the columns which divided the foyer from this main room. And finally—I often wondered why—her eyes found mine as I sat across the room in a semi-darkened corner. Just then, and for the first time, I experienced a sudden, quivery sensation—heat or weakness, or both—and because of her fixed and yet

seemingly unconscious look. Olga, of course, was playing all the while, and dreaming, too. But when the music was done, I sat up, thinking of Albertine. But then Olga said something to me, and Albertine did not look my way for some time afterward. An illusion, I concluded. I am too full of romance! But how lovely she did look! And then I thought of Olga's possible feelings could she have sensed my thoughts.

But there was another incident. Olga, Albertine and I were at a concert. And Albertine, as I recall it now, sat close to the rail a little before and to the right of me. We had by then become quite friendly, but not at all intimate. Despite the previously described look, I did not feel that intimacy was at all possible here. She cared too much for Phil and was too considerate of her own affairs and obligations. I had told myself that I had no reason to imagine that she would ever be drawn to me. But at an interlude in the concert—whereby a distinguished violinist was holding his audience spellbound—she turned to me and whispered: "Sometimes I feel that I should not come to listen to such things. They make my life seem so ridiculous, so narrow. They only make me unhappy."

"But why?" I asked. "You have everything. Beauty, opportunity, a future."

"Oh, no, I haven't anything. I never will have."

"Nonsense! What do you mean? Why not?"

"Because I shall never be able to use what you think I have in the way you mean. I can't do what some

people would do. I'm too sorry for people, I guess, or too faithful or considerate." She looked at me again with those kindly, sweet eyes of hers.

I frowned. For now, it seemed, her significance as a sweetheart, if not a friend, should be dismissed by me at once. And because of this I was just a little glum and sad. After the concert we went somewhere for tea, and then I refused a dinner invitation and went home.

But still, a little while after—maybe a month—here was this third scene or moment—and I saying to her: "I, mind?" I remember she looked at me oddly, a little nervously, I thought, and left the room, to fix her hair or change her dress, perhaps. But presently she was back, and, some pre-dinner cocktails between us, we sat and talked of a number of things—Olga, mutual friendships—scandal then in the papers. But all the while myself feeling a certain newness, a strangeness in her mood or manner. This now titivated my nerves and thoughts, made me restless and curious.

And then finally she said: "Phil's had a new piece of luck." Cloyd was going to take him into partnership. And then she went on to tell me that in connection with this Phil had just closed a big contract for an estate on Long Island which he and Cloyd were to use in some way as a summer sales place. Next, that she and Phil were likely to be moving from here into upper Fifth Avenue or thereabouts.

"Splendid!" I said. "Haven't I told you that one of these days you'll have to play the rôle of a great lady?"

But she scoffed at that. "Never, with Phil," she said, calmly. "You don't know him as I do. He's not interested in that sort of thing. He doesn't care enough about anything, unless it's money, maybe. And I sometimes think he doesn't care so very much about that. Once I thought I knew him, but now, well . . . and besides, to do anything socially we'd have to have millions, and they're not made in Phil's work. He'd have to make it through investments or speculation, and I don't know whether he's really interested in that. Mostly he cares about decoration as Cloyd does. And we haven't the social connections that Cloyd has. We have only acquaintances, introductions, trade connections. Oh, I know."

"But you, personally? You surely need never despair of anything," I assured her.

"Oh, needn't I? Well, think what you please. But I know. And I'm not despairing. For I'd never leave Phil, whatever happened to him. Besides, I'm not unhappy. He's been too good to me and everybody connected with me. I couldn't! I wouldn't! Never!"

Yet her eyes. They looked so dreamful, needful.

And then we sat there, each looking at the other. It was almost dark; there were only a few lights in the room. But I recall one light that played on our faces from the side. And Albertine's looked pale and a little sad and a little romantic, more so than ever I had seen it. And then I looked into her eyes, and suddenly, whether because of her or myself, or both, I felt some-

thing—admiration, desire, a coming out the one to the other, and in a new or clearer, more understanding, more sympathetic way.

"Al," I said, "you're lonely, aren't you?"

"No."

"Oh, yes, you are."

"Oh, no, I'm not! Not at all, I tell you!" Then as suddenly: "Yes, I am, too. Very, at times."

"Now?"

"Yes."

"Married to the wrong man?"

"Oh, no, I won't say that! It isn't true. But I'm young and he's so wrapped up in his business. It's terrible! But I shouldn't talk about it."

She got up, agitated, intense, and walked away. I followed. "Al?" I said, inquiringly.

"Oh, yes, I know," she said. "I know what you mean. I do like you. I might as well admit it. You've guessed it before, haven't you?"

"Yes," I said. "Anyhow, I've wondered."

"And yet you like Olga," she added.

"Yes."

"Much?"

"Quite a little," I admitted.

"But you don't really love her, do you?" She arched her head.

"Oh, Albertine, you know how these things are. You know how life is. But why discuss Olga? It's

you . . ." and I took hold of her arm. But as instantly she backed away toward a window.

"Be careful!" she cautioned. "Don't forget there are servants."

"Yes, I know."

"And Phil might come in."

"Yes, I know all that. But you, Al, you really care?"

"Yes."

"Much."

"Yes, very much."

"Well, then . . ." and I moved closer to her.

But she shook her head. "No, it can't be! It won't ever be! You needn't think it will be, because it won't! I know that!"

"And why not?"

"Because it won't."

"And why not?"

"Well, I owe Phil too much. Oh, how much! It would be terrible! I would never forgive myself. I couldn't! Besides, I'm not really as strong as you think I am. I'm a coward, afraid, for him, myself, everybody. Oh, you don't know how it is. But it is. Besides . . ." and she paused, looking at me.

"Besides what?"

"I'm afraid of you."

"Of me?"

"Yes. Oh, you know how you are. You can't care for any one entirely. It isn't in you. You love life, beauty, love—but just me, any one—look at Olga!"

"Oh, I know," I said, crossly, "but you understand all that. Besides, there is an attraction between you and me. Do you deny that?"

"No."

"It's strong, isn't it?"

"Yes, but just the same, I wouldn't! I couldn't! I owe Phil too much. You'll think I'm crazy, but now that I've gone so far I might as well tell you that I knew we'd have a scene just like this some day. I knew it the first time we met. It was at that concert, do you remember? But I knew too that I wouldn't ever be unfaithful to Phil. I may suffer, but I can't help that."

I drew close and put an arm around her. As quick as though she were meaning to push me away, she was in my arms, pressed tight against me, her face wax-white, her lips against mine. Then as swiftly, before I could murmur, she was loose again, and walking quickly toward another room, "Wait," she called, almost coldly, "I'll be back in a moment."

So for ten, fifteen minutes I sat there alone, thinking. And wondering at the strangeness of such a scene. And with scarcely a previous sign. When she came into the room again she was fresh, calm, in her hands some roses for a bowl on the table, and snapping on all the lights she went about arranging this and that. But when I attempted to take her in my arms, she repulsed me.

"No, no more," she said, almost coldly.

"But haven't you just told me that you cared for me?"

"Yes."

"And you really meant it?"

"Every word, yes. But it won't do you or me any good. It can't. It won't. If you are going to insist . . ." and she looked at me in a curious, troubled, even slightly defiant way.

I was disappointed, cross, but not really angry, and I liked her so much that I couldn't leave and wouldn't believe her. Instead we talked and talked, until at midnight Phil came. And by then we had agreed that we were to be the best of friends ever. She could count on me for deep, helpful friendship, and I on her. Wherever they went, I was to come if I could. I would be so welcome! And anything she could do for me—all I needed to do was to call on her—for I was to remember that she loved me, oh truly, and how much! And I went away, thinking that it would not be long before I should possess her, for all she said.

Yet, believe it or not, and in the face of related incidents—some more passionate, some less, but always furtive—I could never get her to keep even an agreed upon appointment, whatever the time or place. Rather, the thing went on and on, with her continuing to resist me, yet always with the reiterated assurance of her love—she would always love me—I need not fear that she would ever change. Ah, if I only knew how pleasing, thrilling even, it was for her

to see me walk in unannounced or hear my voice over the telephone! Couldn't I understand? Wouldn't I believe that it was only because of her loyalty to Phil that she refrained from satisfying my every desire? For truly, in some reminiscent as well as present grateful way, she cared for Phil. Only this thing between us was a living flame! Terrible! It kept her half sick and yet courageous and hopeful, too, and so made life endurable. Would I not believe that? And yet join me she would not. I must wait—wait until something changed her, made her sufficiently powerful to resist her gratitude and sympathy for Phil as well as strong enough to take what above all things she desired.

But eventually—and almost in spite of her—the thing did come to pass, and lasted, with changes of mood and periods of regret—even quarrels and temporary dismissals—for nearly three years, ending finally in a warm and durable friendship.

We had gone to inspect a rather large seaside estate on the south shore of Long Island, not too far from Southampton, which Phil proposed, as he had previously, in connection with another estate but that had come to nothing, to use as a summer headquarters for the furtherance of art sales to such prospects as would be impressed by the particular brand of entertainment and social contacts he with Cloyd and his friends as catspaws, planned to supply. It was a new departure for the Millerton-Cloyd concern, and for Albertine involved prospective social trials such as she had never previ-

ously endured and with the details of which she was not wholly familiar. In the main it consisted of playing hostess to a group of more or less purely mercenary hangers-on of Phil's who were there through him and Cloyd to sell something on a commission basis. Along with these were some genuine, if impecunious, social figures (left-overs of the old Ward McAllister "Four Hundred" days) who were to lend a seeming if not actually genuine social flair to the scene and so impress such wealthy prospects (principally western multi-millionaires) as could be induced to come there. Also, perhaps, or actually some real social figures, friends of Cloyd's who would come because he wanted them to, and whom, through Phil,—his managerial skill,—he proposed to almost royally entertain.

And indeed the situation was, in its way, interesting even fascinating to me, as well as to many others. And marked the beginning of a most varied, colorful and interesting life that flowed through and around Albertine and her husband. Yet in the end it affected both of them most unsatisfactorily and eventually left Albertine, at least, cold and even disappointed, if not entirely distrait. As for myself, my own participation in some of its most attractive features, I shall never forget.

But it is here that I must pause to descant on Millerton's absolutely phenomenal rise, the like of which I have never seen paralleled, in his field at least. For by now he was quite wealthy—in the eight or nine hun-

dred thousand class, I should say—a leader in his chosen field and with, as Albertine once bitterly and yet ironically explained, a small social and trade court of his own. Those broken-down French and Italian counts and ladies! Those English gentlemen of title but no means! And all so willing to do his bidding for the money and introductions (Cloyd's) with which he was prepared to supply them. The errands they did for him! The art acquisitions and ultimate sales to the new-rich which they effected by all sorts of intrigue! An almost shameful commercial story, I should say. And yet, as I have many times since asked myself, was he really so evil, since he was in trade? Or necessarily the friend of any one, since all in that world wore the mask of friendship for profit only? Could he have been? Was he even a faithful husband or a friend of art? I sometimes wondered, because he was so absorbed, free, indifferent, whatever any particular situation required. And yet always so genial, courteous, happy and humorous. I was never quite weary of meditating on him.

And yet for me he seemed to have some kind of a liking, which though it seemed to me at times injudicious I put down mainly to my power to listen to his fantastically, almost ridiculously, pagan views of what constituted order, honesty, wisdom, good policy; in short, anything and everything with which we find ourselves surrounded on this fair and absolutely undecipherable scene. Sometimes I used to look at him in

genuine amazement, since he appeared to have no conscience at all, although a kind genial good will and sympathy which gave as freely as they took.

"The bunk" was what he used to call his business. And yet following that he was capable of bursting into the most enticing and convincing descriptions of this and that rarity—a tapestry, a rug, a chair, a carved English, Italian or French ceiling or complete chamber paneling that he was importing. And at what cost! Enormous, sometimes! But to be sold later, of course, for a still more preposterous sum to one or another of the rich "suckers" (the term is his) with whom he preferred to deal. As for the "eastern rich," as he sometimes troubled to nominate them, poof! Their alleged artistic possessions? Poof! By now he had examined, as he said, most of the old great houses in the east and had discovered scarcely anything of real art value in them. The great Astor mansion at Fifth Avenue and Sixty-fifth Street (gone now) he pronounced to be "full of junk"! The Vanderbilt, Gould, Sloane houses—impossible! The only people who had anything real or beautiful were those rich western "dubs" who then, by the grace of God and one Phil Millerton, no less, were falling heir to some things really gloriously worth while from abroad!

But ah, the prices he had to charge them! God! And the way they "squealed" as he himself worded it at times! (And here he would

smile dryly or chuckle.) But, strange to say, as he also added and with more laughter, once he got them going, they became tame enough and even came back for more. Think of that! Oh, yes! And yet, why not? To whom else could they go? Who else was putting the time, labor, investigation, this, that, into this truly great work? Why, through his shrewd agents here and in Europe, and with Cloyd acting as a foil or catspaw, he was combing the entire art market and "salting down" (the words are his) some of the most amazing treasures, provided always, of course, any one was really interested in that "junk"! And then he would take apart the whole historic art idea and show what forgeries and trickeries had already transpired in connection with this and that, all of which had already so befogged the scene that it was very difficult to be sure of anything. And yet how easy for him to befog the scene still more—make it absolutely impossible for any one—the best art judges in the world—to *know* and so be sure. Documents, for instance—an appalling fanfare of them—lies, principally, but most elaborately penned or printed and sworn to by God knows whom —which made it possible, as he insisted, to assure the trusting and gullible, even the doubting, purchasers. I used to gaze at him fairly hypnotized by his revelations.

And perhaps because of this, as I say, he seemed to like to talk to me. Or perhaps it was because of Al's and Olga's favor and praise. At any rate, he always seemed pleased that I could be with Albertine when he was not

able to be there and so sure of her. And yet, as I often said to myself, how can he be so dull? Or is he? Does he or does he not suspect her or me? And does he or does he not care for her? Yet because of the long period of years in which I knew both, I was finally compelled to conclude that he did care for her a great deal in his strange way, although unquestionably and in spite of himself, his deepest and unchanging love was for his business or trade, which, as he saw it, was, in part, at least, creative. He could make great houses and had, as he once said to me.

But let me return to that proposed summer mansion or sales place by the sea. Albertine and I had taken a car as well as a day off to look at four or five places, and finally at this one which Phil's agents had reported on as probably the most desirable. The house was of stone, brick and clapboard, containing some eighteen or twenty rooms, with a fine wide veranda, balconies, and a most carefully maintained lawn and flower-beds. There were also tennis courts, a handsome bathing pavilion, a lounge or reading room, a large garage, and scattered over the lawn tables with brilliant parasols. It stood high on a spit of cubistic sand commanding the sea, and inland were some eighteen or twenty acres of bare, rolling dunes, with walks here and there and sea pines and sand-binding grasses. Between the house and the sea stretched a great tawny beach, against which immense breakers thundered and over which gulls

hung and distant ocean-going vessels were penciled like trees. I can still feel the salt and tang of it all.

The house on the day we went there was vacant and cold—it was early April still—but that did not prevent us from roaming in and out and speculating on Phil's dreams or schemes and Albertine's social difficulties or whatever you choose to call them. For she did not relish Phil's idea of using his or her social life as a background for his business schemes. So wandering about this place and looking at the thundering and foaming waves and spray on the beach with an April sun on them, she proceeded to unburden her heart to me.

"You see, it really means that I will be in business, too; that I will have to play hostess to a lot of people I don't know or don't like and who haven't the slightest use for me except as manager of a sort of country club in which they can do business. But what about me? What do I get out of it?" And she looked at me.

"Well, it certainly is a life of sorts," I replied. "As a chance to study and observe a lot of amazing characters, it rather appeals to me."

"Oh, they interest you, of course, and me too, a little as characters, only such contemptible ones mostly! They're all so mercenary! I can't tell you! And Phil is too, only he doesn't really mean to be. He's generous and even lavish with me. My relatives and his—just lavish, that's all. You know that. I can give his or my people nearly anything I like and buy almost anything for myself. But he can't

see what a poor figure he makes of me. For, of course, people know—they all do—these society people that he lures. They work for him and do anything he wants for pay, but as for me, well, you know how they look on me. If I would flirt with some of the men, that would be acceptable enough, but anything more, well . . . In fact, one of them once said to me when I repulsed him that I must consider the worlds that lay between us!" And once more she lifted her eyes and smiled wisely in her own philosophic way.

Then she spoke of a certain Count di Brozzio who had recently entered Phil's life—an Italian socially prominent here as well as abroad who was acting as go-between in Phil's approaches to those members of New York society who could be induced to play their parts in this scene, for pay, of course.

"But what a shallow fop he is!" she said. "He thinks of nothing but money, society, clothes, and women, and he'll do almost anything for money, Phil says. He has no heart, really."

And next out of her portfolio of sketches came Lady Weathersweet—no climber, since she did not need to climb, but cold and practical—who was now advising Phil as to this and that and providing his raw multimillionaire patrons with at least a few social contacts, but for a definite price.

"They all make a fuss over me in public," explained Albertine, "but when we meet behind the scenes, that's another story!"

Yet in spite of all this, she took a fair, if not really enthusiastic, interest in all that she saw here and that presumably was to be done under her direction and according to her taste. "Of course," she said, when I enthused over the sea-y beauty of the place, "it can be made very attractive, and Phil will let me help there. But you must come out and see these people, spend some time here. Phil expects you to. He likes you so much, you know. You inspire so much faith in him." And once more she looked at me half-laughingly, a look that provoked me to seize her and try to overcome her resistance.

"Al, why do you fight me?" I asked.

"Oh, you know why."

But though tense and pale as always when she felt the least danger, she was now a little sad and relaxed. I felt it intensely—a certain coming out to me, a strong wish behind all this intention never to permit herself to wish.

"Al?"

"No, don't ask me, especially here." She looked decidedly disturbed as she said this.

"Why especially here?"

"Well, you know why. Even if I wanted to, I have no way of protecting myself. And you haven't either. So don't say any more."

"Oh, don't be so cross! You've always an excuse. And yet you're always pretending to care for me. I don't see why in the devil I go on! I won't either!"

She had a name for me which she used when she was especially moved or tender. It was "Massa," Negro for "Master."

"But, Massa, dear," she said, "don't be angry. It's you who are always quarreling. You know how much I care for you and why I act the way I do."

"Oh, bosh!" I exclaimed, angrily. For who was she, I thought, to lead me at her apron strings? I would stand for this no longer, I said to myself. And then to her: "This is my last trip anywhere with you. I'm not going to follow you around any longer. You don't care for me, and this is the end!" I moved toward a door which gave into a hall and a descending stair.

"But, Massa, please wait! Don't go! Why will you be so unreasonable, and especially here of all places? Suppose something came of this? How could I get out of it or explain it? Would you be the one to help me? You know how you would act."

"Oh, tommyrot! What nonsense. As though there aren't doctors and birth control! And of course you couldn't possibly have another child after seven years! Phil's child." (I was thinking of her son Braith's age.)

"Oh!" She was startled. "Do you think I would be willing to do that? Never! I care for Phil too much! I owe him too much!"

"Very well! Owe him for my dropping out of your life, with my compliments, will you?"

"Oh well, if that's the way you feel about it, all

right," she answered, "but I certainly think you are unreasonable. I certainly do!"

I strode out and down the stairs to the lower floor and she after me. As I neared the main entrance she called to me to wait. "Please, Massa, let me go back with you. Don't leave me here, please!"

I opened the door angrily, only to catch a view of the beach and sea and the bright shore pavilion that would be so charming in summer with that gay, worthless, conniving company fluttering about. I hesitated a moment and she came forward. In her eyes, her face, was the first trace of that real sensual weakness that at full tide can undo all capable of it. I studied her. "Damn you!" I exclaimed. Then seeing the power I held, if but for this moment, I decided to act. She desired me. That was plain. As for Millerton, well, did he really care for her? In a homely, friendly way, as a dutiful husband cares for a dutiful wife, yes, but this way, never! Besides, what if she were caused a little trouble? She had admitted to previous contraceptions and escapes.

Without a word I seized her. There was a struggle. As always, only more violently, she protested. At last, exhausted, or pretending to it (how is one to know?) she sank down. I could feel in her even then a quarrel between yielding and resisting. At last, but with mock opposition, I fear (I never could be sure), she surrendered, calling me brute, devil!

Afterwards, complaints. Now I had truly com-

promised her. What was she to do now? Suppose this led to something, and just now, when she had so many things coming on—this dreadful summer, with all of its obligations? But what did I care?

I stared, amused, triumphant, and liking her more than ever. For now she was really mine. And would argue no more, fight no more. Now we would be real sweethearts, I thought. I could feel it. Only, how dishevelled and strained she looked! Troubled, frightened even, and so all the more attractive. And still railing because of this and that, until finally I went over to her. "Ah, hush, Al, be still! You know you like me. You can't hate me. That's ridiculous. Fight if you want to, but kiss me now." And I drew her to me. Weakly she yielded, but with hot tears streaming down her cheeks.

"Oh, I know how you are feeling," I consoled her. "You were loyal all this time, weren't you? Or you thought you were. But were you? You've been caring for me, haven't you—holding on to me against some day when you might not wish to be so loyal?"

And then we argued that. In the end I expressed sorrow, at which she said: "Oh, I'm not blaming you. I've only myself to blame, if I blame any one. But it's all so sad. Phil has been so good to me and to all of my people." And she cried the more, the while all I could say was: "Ah, Al, please stop. Don't cry. It won't turn out as badly as you think. And you needn't offend any

more if you don't want to. I won't annoy you, or leave you either, if it's going to hurt you so."

There was a more or less silent return in the car. Step by step she was retracing all the years she had been with Phil. And now this, the beginning of a great change, perhaps. At last, as we neared her place, I asked: "What about it? Shall I come up with you? What do you want me to do?"

"Oh, come up, of course. If Phil's there and sees me come in alone, he'll think it strange. I told him you were going along to-day."

And so, up. But no Phil until much later. Business. And in the meantime, Al very sober and charming after dressing for dinner. Yet once more a long, if calmer, discussion of the pros and cons of this situation. The possible result. How she was to do. How I was to act for her, accompany her, in case anything went wrong, so that Phil could not possibly suspect.

And then silence until some two weeks later, when she was positive that she would need the aid of an obstetrician, and that at once. And with me stirring about to find the ideal person, and, as I saw it, finding him. After which, and to my utter astonishment, a sudden decision on her part not to see any obstetrician or do anything save go forward and have the child!

But wasn't there considerable danger in that? I asked. Millerton? This sudden conception after seven years? True enough, she admitted, but more than once she and Phil had talked of having another child, a com-

panion for Braith, and once had actually agreed on it. But something had interfered—a long business trip on which she was to accompany him—for one thing. And recently, within the year, he himself had mentioned it, only she had said no. But now—well now—this very next day, in fact—she was going to announce that she suspected something—carelessness—and that she was afraid she would have to see a doctor, whereupon if he objected—as he always had in the past—well—well, leave it to her. But she had determined to go through with it.

But why? What was her reason?

Well, she had always wanted a little girl, and she had a feeling that this child would be a girl, just as she had been sure of Braith's sex. Next, the child was mine, and more than once, although she had never let herself act on her dream, she had wished that she and I might have a child. And now here it was! And should she, for want of a little courage, throw away this opportunity? Never! Besides, then and always she would have something of me with her, something of me that she could love and be happy with, and that long after I was gone—as soon I would be, never fear! Next, if the child was attractive and well-mannered and well-groomed, as she would be, well then, maybe I would never be able to forget completely. She and I, she and I, would be tied by that, however little the whole world might know, however little. And so on

and on, with the most romantic and extended thoughts on this score.

"But supposing it should look like me?" I ventured.

Well, what of it! Who could prove anything? Phil scarcely noticed Braith as it was. He would never suspect me, or her. She was sure of that—which was the desired end.

And yet at this point, I confess to a sense of something unkind about it all. Phil had been and remained —for all his pagan and practical nature which spared no one in a business deal—so friendly, so after a fashion and in some ways (not all by any means) confiding. And now this. Rather a poor return for his efforts, I felt. Yet all things considered, and particularly since Albertine wished it, I was not opposed. For this was not the first instance of the kind. Others, others. But not without the consent and wish of the woman in each instance. I never forced any one to go it alone, to do what they did not wish to do. And in this case there was ample money to make life fairly secure for the offspring. Knowing Al, I knew it would be most carefully and liberally provided for. And since my work always came first with me, I was not pained or irritated by the thought that I might not always be permitted to see the child—although that privilege has always been mine. But without the child ever knowing. (When she reached the age of sixteen, she even began to look at me with intriguing eyes. Growing one's own loves, as it were!)

And so, the following November, a girl—presently named Joan. And Al and Phil celebrating the new arrival in the most grandiose fashion. And I myself contributing a modest present. And with Al before and after well and strong enough not only to go through the summer social activities but a Florida season following. And with no particular word save a general admission that she was once more to become a mother. And with Phil—believe it or not—and for some, to me most inexplicable, reason—convinced that I was just the person to be around to keep Al company in his absence. There had been no shadow of complaint or suspicion on his part when informed by Albertine of the prospect of a child. "Why don't you go through with it?" was what she said he said at the time.

And now I would like to add I have never been able to escape a sense of strangeness, even a sense of fatality in connection with this illegitimate girl child of mine, who began to show a slight resemblance to me even as a baby, certainly in six weeks. Albertine would take great delight showing her to me, at times pointing a significant finger toward the girlie's nose or eye (the color) or ear (most definitely formed like my own) and making a mouth or giving me the wink when no one was looking. I would play around, would I? I would literally take a woman against her will? Well, see what I got for that! And more, she would soon be able to prove it by mere looks. But never mind, Joan was a darling, and I could go now whenever I was

tired of her. For here was my very self, and never, never could I take it away! A pleasant year or two that was.

But before that, the spring and summer on Long Island at the Hampton-Southampton Place, equipped as only Millerton and his staff could do such things! Defiant and even brazen with colorful flowers and awninged tables and chairs and swings and tennis and squash courts and what not, and all in full view of a changeful, warm, rumbling, and all too often foggy sea. And a complete house and garden staff, ostensibly under the direction of Albertine and Phil but really more or less supervised by di Brozzio and Lady Weathersweet. And the guests! Presto! Over the week-ends smart and interesting groups. Those heavy multi-millionaires, of course, but sandwiched in with youngsters and oldsters of what sound or unsound social backgrounds I cannot definitely say. Most certainly some—not a few—were of the surest and hence the most defiant social walks. In addition there were those ultra-sophisticated adventurers of the di-Brozzio-Weathersweet type who knew so well how to command and assemble such individuals as would overawe as well as betray money-bags with social aspirations. Breakfasts, luncheons, teas, dinners, suppers. Dancing, riding, swimming, golfing, tennis, bridge, roulette, baccarat. All the "right" things. But with Albertine complaining to me of the "hollow show."

"Positively," she once said to me, "I cannot tell you how I feel about all this. It isn't like a real home or a real married life."

"But consider it as a show," I said. "It's wonderful —amazing, really, when you think who and what's back of it." I was thinking of Phil—his easy, offhand, pagan soul.

"Oh, you!" she replied. "That's all you care, I know. A good show. They can't snub you very well. But me! You should see the glances that pass occasionally. Oh, dear, how I hate it all! If I didn't owe Phil so much, I just wouldn't stand it!"

"Come, come, Al," I consoled her, "cheer up! Think of what a delightful place it is. It's better than a club or a hotel, and you have a suite to yourself and nearly everything managed for you. Besides, you know you have some friends. You couldn't be yourself and not have." (For I had heard many nice things concerning her.) "And the thing is going off wonderfully. Lots of people think you are breaking into society."

"Oh, society! A lot I care about society—the kind of people I've seen. Snobs and money-bags. How I wish that you and I could go off somewhere all by ourselves, with just enough money, and then live out our lives, or a few years anyhow. Oh, for just two or three years! I would take those if I couldn't have any more."

I gazed at her. Love, I thought, at last! The ap-

proaching baby. I held her close, and presently she resumed her old courage and air.

None the less, that first summer proved to be merely the first step into an ever-widening social field for the Millertons. There were larger and more pretentious places in town; trips to Palm Beach or Aiken, or even London, in the winter, interspersed with flying visits to White Sulphur or Tuxedo or California, as Phil's plans or schemes dictated. And, as I could see, and as such things went along, Albertine rapidly acquiring the art of mastering servants as well as bringing together, through gifts and liberal entertainment, such a bevy of smart and bright professionals of one field and another as might have served to entertain or at least make comfortable any such world-weary plutocrats as would allow themselves to be thus regaled.

In fact, I recall one grand place on Long Island which belonged to the Vanderbilts and which was leased to Millerton at some frightful cost. And then stocked with servants and social secretaries, and finally programs or schedules for entertainment worked out. For some the lure was gambling, after the best Monte Carlo fashion; for others, food and drink and attractive men and women of the stage, opera stars and musicians. Then, of course, there were always the very presentable and conscienceless nobles who were in America for what they could get. And doing their best for Millerton to make the thing come off or go over. And in the main succeeding, so that after several seasons you saw

Millerton's name along with Cloyd's in the social columns.

I spent much time with Albertine during all of this, visiting by turns each summer one or another of these at times really remarkable places. For because of the baby she was always insisting that I was to come and see or hear this or that in connection with it, and when I did not, lecturing me concerning my inherent lack of anything paternal or domestic in my nature, until one day I turned to her and assured her that Life was my mistress and my bride, and that out of Life, in such forms as to me seemed artistically valuable, came my real children.

"Oh, you're not telling me anything I don't know, dear," she replied, "but I wish you would take a little more interest in Joan. She's going to be so attractive. If you knew anything at all about babies, you could see that for yourself. She's going to be beautiful. And she looks like you, too, although Phil would never see it. But I can. Can't you, really?"

I looked, and at the end of two years began to note certain things which reminded me of myself. A tendency to look quizzically and sidewise, also a tendency to use her hands in the same manner that I did. And her eyes the color of my own.

But in the meantime, as the years went on, Albertine accepting quite calmly these seasonal shifts from one great place to another and all this show of wealth and luxury as something that sprang out of conditions over

which neither she nor Phil had any control. Rather, as she frequently expressed it—and perhaps it was this fatalistic mood of hers that so strongly united us—she and Phil and myself were just tools of some moving fate which might have something of importance behind it in the long run. But most likely not. Life could not have any real significance, she often said. Its current objectives were too ridiculous, too trivial—fame, food, technical knowledge wherewith to earn the silly prizes of life, love, lust. "The best that can be said of me when my life is over," she said to me once, "is that I was good to my relatives." Her chief conclusion in regard to Phil's efforts was that he knew how to conduct his business to a profitable end. But when the profit was in, what did they do with it except make a little more acceptable and hence socially more agreeable and so a socially somewhat more recognized show than heretofore in order to do the same thing over. And in addition help their relatives. But of what importance was it all? There were plenty of people on earth as it was, and helping their relatives only meant adding more people to the number already here. And then she would smile and look as serene and attractive as a tall, pale, waxy flower.

During all of the period in which I was in contact with Al, there was but one quarrel and one genuine separation, during which period I busied myself with other matters. But not without thinking of her and Joan and the strange fact that of all the women I had

suffered over or who had been compelled to suffer because of me, it should be Albertine—between whom and myself existed really not much more than a platonic friendship based on mental accord—who should bear me a child. And this because in all of the other cases, fear overcame any existing desire for and eventually dictated the elimination of the prospective progeny. And this seemed odd and gave her an appeal for me which otherwise she might not have worn over so long a period of time. But the passing break between us came about in this way.

There came to Millerton just at the time that he was ascending to his highest financial level—those days when he still maintained the great house on Long Island and a winter palace in Florida—a certain young Chicago multi-millionaire wanting a new and grand house on Long Island, where he proposed to entertain in lavish fashion. Also a winter palace in Florida, properly landscaped and decorated and furnished. (As a matter of fact, I am sure that Millerton, through his emissaries, had caused the young Crœsus to believe that he needed these things.) At any rate, presto! A most distinguished young architect called in—one of the handsomest and most high-mannered young gentlemen I have ever met—architect by profession but socially most highly placed, who followed his profession because of a genuine love for it, employing decorators, sculptors, landscape gardeners and whom not else to carry out his grand designs. And by degrees a business

if not a genuine friendship between himself and Millerton.

And in consequence, architect and millionaire at Millerton's country place week-end after week-end. And much talk in the newspapers and magazines of the lovely palaces being erected and splendidly furnished for Mr. Chicago by the aforesaid architect, whom we will call Stetheridge. No mention of Phil, since he always preferred to be known merely as an art agent aiding gentlemen of wealth and taste to materialize their dreams. That Mr. Chicago happened to be a little crazy and wouldn't know what to do with two such great palaces when he got them didn't bother Phil. He just saw to it that the man who was paying for it all believed that the idea behind it all was important and his own.

In connection with this, trips on the part of Phil and Albertine and Stetheridge. To Europe and to Florida. And Albertine confiding to me that the European trips were necessary because of the great amount of artistic material to be gathered—some two million dollars' worth. Phil, she said, was finding it necessary to make his own European connections and arrangements. And so presently, because of these separations—three to four months in each instance—Albertine and I involved in a quarrel. For, in the first place, as I soon began to note—and more especially after Stetheridge arrived on the scene, letters were scarce during these absences, and when they did ar-

rive, peculiarly colorless, I thought. Next, Stetheridge, who was a man of far too many parts to suit me, was always somewhere with the Millertons when these scriptic lacks became so noticeable. In addition to being handsomer than myself, he had brains and taste to spare, as well as an exceedingly grand manner which was very enticing to most women—even to Albertine, as I suspected, who all too often had expressed rather withering contempt for the ill mannered male types whom Phil's business drew about her. In short, he really represented a genuine social position for any woman whom he might choose to share it with. And here was Al, as by now I was privily thinking, serene and lovely and with some means of her own by now. And assuming, as I often jealously thought at this time, that should she change or Stetheridge choose to persuade her to—well, things as strange as that had certainly happened before in this world.

And from people who knew us both, I soon learned that in Paris and Deauville and at Nice and Palm Beach, Al and Stetheridge were frequently together, quite friendly, to say the least, and that maybe Millerton would lose his faithful and handsome wife after all. And as for me—well, would I not be losing Al—a thought, now that I was in danger of losing her, that was not so cheering as from some other past moods it might have seemed. To all of which Albertine, the first time I met her after this and questioned her concerning it, replied that it was all too silly. Stetheridge!

Pooh! Didn't every one know what a flirt he was as well as how it had come about that she and Phil and Stetheridge went abroad together? And could she help it if Phil expected her to be nice to his principal artistic associate? How could I be so suspicious, jealous? Wasn't there Joan? (And Braith. I sardonically interjected.)

But for all that it did not end there, just the same. My pride was hurt. I felt myself belittled by the power which a mere architect and gentleman of social connections could exercise over my own psychic drag. And so, anger; at moments flaming hatred. To hell with her! To hell with Millerton and all his and her shabby crew! I would desert her forever! Never again! Never! And so on and so forth. Who has not mumbled such curses and ill wishes and contemptuous comments in the hour of his humiliation?

None the less, I was not done with Albertine. Not for many years. For there was Joan. And I could not help thinking of her. In the next place, I kept hearing after a time that Stetheridge's interest had cooled, or was cooling; in short, that there was a popular débutante who was intriguing his fancy and whom Al resented very much. Rumor. Gabble. But despite which I still continued to stay away from Albertine, though there were some scenes during all of which the moods and conversations were of such a nature as to indicate that there was considerable feeling, and of a binding character, between us. For there were

notes, at first, then telephone calls, not only from her but once from Millerton, no doubt at her instigation. To him I made some genial excuse for my absence. But when Albertine finally came down to my studio, I held her resentfully at the door.

"But, oh, what's the matter?" she mournfully insisted—and looking at me—I cannot tell you how. She was very near to tears. "How can you act so? You know why I had to go abroad. Didn't I get Phil to invite you, only you wouldn't come?"

This was true, but I was not to be mollified so easily. She had rejected me. There had been few—sometimes no letters. Besides, there were other things to be explained: rumors I had heard, places in which she had been seen with Stetheridge but without Millerton while I was stuck off in New York and for all of which, although she had explanations enough, I was resentful. Only the real truth, as I saw it, was that smarting from the snubs and comments of people socially better placed than herself, Albertine had at last chosen to dream a dream of social superiority, been intrigued by the idea, if not the genuine possibility, of stepping ahead of some of these people who were so very upstage with and sometimes highly contemptuous of her. And how she would have lowered some of them if she had married Stetheridge. Only in the last analysis, as I knew, when it came to the definite business of divorcing Phil, she would never have gone through with it, never. He would have needed to die

first. But there was the dream. And she had acted on that or moved in it, much to my belittlement and anger.

And so now, having her here and hearing her ramble on, I took a definite revenge. I accused her of trying to get back in my good graces because of her rejection by Stetheridge.

"You were interested in me until you thought you could do better," I railed. "But now that that's all over and Stetheridge doesn't want you, you think you can come back and pick me up again. Well, you can't do it! I'm through! I'm interested in some one else. And as for Joan, if she ever really needs me, well, I'll be there for her sake, but not for yours, you can depend on that!"

She was startled. Why, she was never interested in Stetheridge in that way for one moment, or he in her. It was all for Phil's schemes. "Oh, you are cruel!" she cried. And there was a rather dramatic, white-faced and silent departure. And for two months I heard nothing and saw nothing except occasional social mention in the newspapers. But in the meantime, thoughts, thoughts, thoughts. For in the course of time, as was natural, I had grown very fond of Albertine and her world. And there was the tie that Joan had created. More, and this in spite of myself, Joan was a tie. There were hours in which I could actually feel Albertine thinking of me, for unquestionably we had a great deal in common.

And then one day, when spring was coming on and they would be leaving for their country place soon, a telephone call from her. Wouldn't I let her talk to me for a moment? Was I still so angry? Oh, please, wouldn't I not be? She missed me so. Several times during the past two months she had called me up, but I had been out. Was I well? Didn't I want to hear something about Joan, even if I didn't want to hear about her? And couldn't she come down to see me, or wouldn't I come up to see her? And oh, please, I wasn't to get angry. Didn't I have other girls all the time? And had she complained? And supposing she had flirted a little, did it make any real difference? She had never really forgotten me. And was so gloomy these days. Why couldn't we be friends? Besides, one of the reasons she was calling me was that Joan was sick, really sick, with scarlet fever. Of course she was quarantined in a part of the house and the best of care being given her, and she wasn't in any serious danger as yet, only— "But don't you want to come up for a little while, dear? I would so much like to see you."

There was the voice, the old Al most definitely come back, to say nothing of Joan. And so once more after an "Oh, all right!" a visit to the house. And Al, after greeting me most warmly and showing me Joan under the most antiseptic conditions (doing excellently, as the doctor insisted), asking me to stay to dinner or at least to wait and say hello to Phil. "He asked after you

so often. Why won't you?" Yet with my eventually getting out without doing either, only with a promise —and so a phase of the old relationship reëstablished.

For while I now told myself that I would nevermore interest myself physically in Al (and did not for over a year thereafter), still there was this underlying friendship which drew us together and held us. At the same time, I really came to feel toward her much as I might toward a mother or sister. Occasionally, as time went on, there was a return of the old desire, but this was more and more evaded by me because of newer and livelier interests. In fact, there were periods later—quite some few years later—when I scarcely more than saw Al or Joan from year to year.

But before those reduced and more or less colorless periods, there were some interesting hours as before with Al and Phil and Joan, week-end visits, concerts, opera, dinners, luncheons, with Al and some of her friends. For, as in the past, Phil was absorbed in his commercial interests and while more than willing to rely on me for Al's chaperonage in his absence, never really willing to give of his actual time—his "full jeweled business hours" as he used often and ironically to speak of them. Yet when present and, as before, resuming those intimate and always revealing conversations which so tended to amuse us both as well as to uncover the extortion and "bunk" that went with his business.

Yet presently, within the next five years, a veritable

hurricane of financial difficulties, which might be said to have sprung from this same amused and pagan, if by no means careless, viewpoint of his. For always, as I saw it, he had sheer genius for the work in hand. Up to the storm concerning which I am about to speak, he had gone forward financially as well as socially with great strides. Every one in the art world knew of his skill, even if all did not know of some of his strange and varied arrangements.

For instance: Millerton, Ltd. would arrange, for commensurate compensation, of course, for private and altogether gorgeous apartments for certain rich and somewhat nervous old clients who were no longer happy with their wives and desired younger beauties to share their dreams. Even the beauties might be arranged for if necessary. More, there were multi-millionaires in other cities who were actually impelled to come to New York by ideas instilled in their minds by persons "planted" in their employ or company by Millerton himself for this very purpose.

And one other feature. Above the door of his establishment, in a section boxed in from every side and so free from observation, sat one of his shrewd assistants or, as he always called them, his "clever pets" (always attractive young women), whose business it was . . . But wait! Before her on a desk a file case with name and state license number of every exceptionally wealthy automobile owner in America. Between her and the outside world a small lattice window through which

she looked down on the street. And now, see, here comes an imposing car. It is stopping and a gentleman is stepping out. But not so quickly but that "clever pet" has time enough to run through the card index and find the name of the owner of the car as per the license plate, and in some instances to examine his photograph. Was it he who approached? Then forthwith a house phone call to the doorman and to the floor manager. "William Ainsley Gay, of Denver, entering." And then the doorman to Mr. Gay: "Good morning, Mr. Gay. Pleased to see you in New York again." And then to the obsequious floorman already approaching: "Mr. William Ainsley Gay, of Denver." And the floorman welcoming Mr. Gay as only a floorman can. You may well surmise the oily value of such vivid thoughtfulness in regard to all who came in contact with Millerton, Ltd.

But now as to the storm. At the very height of Phil's fame, a sudden charge of customs robbery by no less a power than the Federal Government, via its port agents in New York, Philadelphia, Boston and elsewhere, backed by data prepared by the Federal Secret Service. Yet not before one Philip Millerton, not actually at the moment, but possibly later, to be involved in this maze of amazing charges had had time to enlist the services of three of the shrewdest lawyers in the east and various political and social powers and aids. Yet for all that, in all of the great dailies an open charge to the effect that a ring of art dealers and

agents, who in many of their transactions appeared to be dealing ultimately with one Millerton, Ltd., had been swindling the United States Government to the extent of ten millions in undeclared values. And all this coupled with the threat of arrest aimed, no less, at this and that person, even at one Phil Millerton, unless quite all in connection with these duty frauds could be cleared up, the government reimbursed and its penalties for fraud satisfied.

And Millerton, therefore, one of the most absorbed and tense, if not outwardly troubled, of men I had seen in some time—kind but thoughtful as he was. For of course I saw a great deal of him and Al during these days, and I could feel the strain that was upon him. And obviously there was no way out of the situation other than (1) by restitution in part; (2) by shoving the blame onto agents and underlings, who in order to be made to accept this onerous load would have to be protected from jail sentences and paid as well; and (3) via political, financial and social influences, sufficient to persuade the government not to point too directly, if at all, at Millerton himself.

But the work that was necessary for all this! A veritable phalanx of lawyers who stood four-square about Phil, and with demands for particulars and writs and stays of every type soon had the whole matter wire-hedged and barbed in Federal Courts while Phil's agents went about ameliorating the hearts of this and that person. In the long run, as far as I could gather,

not a few of the articles thus slyly imported were acknowledged and the duties and fines paid—a total of something like two million dollars, if I recall right. Next, although Phil escaped any direct legal attack on himself as the principal and guide in all this criminality, still there was one necessary appearance before a Federal Grand Jury, during which he answered most easily, he said, all that was asked him.

But the publicity in connection with it! Enormous! And the blazing headlines, so injurious, even by innuendo, to his standing as an impeccable dealer in art! And a yet severer phase of the whole affair the annoyance caused many of his wealthy patrons, who were compelled not only to see their names mentioned as buyers of the suspected objects but to receive government agents who were abroad tracing this and that in order to properly evaluate the same.

Lastly the money to be paid! First to his lawyers, whom he secretly termed "damned jackals." Next to the government. Next to those lesser agents and assigns who had acted for him. And finally to various Wall Street bankers, friends of his on the surface, but whom in this crisis he was compelled to approach for loans and whom eventually he dubbed "blood-suckers." In short, and overnight, as it were—and despite a plethora of stocks and bonds and this and that—Phil Millerton finding himself, as both he and Al told me, in the hands of money-lenders. "And Heaven knows when he will ever be able to get free of them!" said Al.

The one thing that seemed eventually to have saved him was the fact that quite all of his creditors were fully aware that should he be broken and driven to the wall, there would be no cash for any one. All would go to the government and debts would be the portion of many. Next, it was also clearly understood by all that in the matter of judging, importing and selling art, there was not his equal anywhere, and that if left with sufficient leeway, he would at last clear himself financially and so eventually benefit all who were involved with him. In consequence, after something like two years of wrangling and proceedings of all sorts, he was at last free, his own artistic master once more, but with notes at one, three and five years and totaling some five millions.

But in connection with all this, what curious developments! Among others a most interesting trick made public by the United States Customs Department, whereby diamonds, pearls, rare tapestries, famous paintings and what not were introduced duty free. But guess! So commonplace and unimpressive a thing as an old and not startlingly valuable chest or table, which, however, contained the most skillfully contrived secret drawers or a false bottom or top or sides—maybe all of these in one and the same chest—wherein there could be most carefully concealed not one but sometimes actually several of these all but priceless articles. Precious stones in particular and once a necklace, if I

am not mistaken, and said to be worth $375,000; another time a set of plate belonging to an Italian prince, divided into parts and introduced into America during the course of a year by means of several chests with secret pockets or false bottoms or tops.

But always when one of such treasure was en route or about to be sent from Europe, a trick or fake letter addressed to Millerton, Ltd., (the idea Millerton's own, so it was said) and mailed a few days after the shipping of the chest containing the secreted object. And this letter quite regularly stating that by a most unfortunate oversight in the letter of instructions covering the particular chest shipped, the shipper had forgotten to state that in a secret drawer or bottom—always most carefully described in this letter—there had been placed a necklace, or a tapestry, or this or that of great value (and concerning which, and obviously, there had been much previous correspondence), but that now if Mr. Millerton would be so kind, he was to explain the oversight to the American customs authorities and there and then declare the true value of the same and pay whatever duty might be fixed, in order that no suggestion of fraud might appear to attach thereto. Of course, this letter was intended for use only in case the secret shipment chanced to be discovered, whereupon it could be produced as evidence that no fraud had been intended. Otherwise, no letter and no other word of any kind.

Notwithstanding all this, though, the general

newspaper palaver concerning the American art ring that was swindling the government of its proper duties made no direct reference to Millerton as a guilty accomplice. Rather,—and rather only—the government was "curious" as to this and that, but trusting and, more, believing that Mr. Millerton would be able to "explain" all—never a direct statement for instance that he was a thief or anything like that. Never. Not Philip Millerton, Ltd. In the first place it might have been much too difficult to prove. Millerton had been entirely too shrewd as well as busy since the first rumor and had almost succeeded in covering his tracks completely. None the less, a feeling that most definitely he had been or was connected with it; the feeling, that, for a time at least, he was likely to be arrested, tried, convicted, and sent to prison. Yet in due course, the whole thing blowing over without his being arrested but leaving him loaded with bills payable.

Yet even so, as I then and there noted, Phil was never the man to wince. Once in the very midst of this storm he said to me, and with that wry, ironic smile of his into the bargain: "Oh, notes! I have to pay, yes, but if I can, not otherwise. And they can't get what I haven't got. I'll keep a little hay ahead of them and that'll keep 'em following."

And another time—and this the most human, yet to me the most painful and ironic feature of the whole affair—(we were discussing his difficulties, over a highball)—he said, *and to me*—"I wouldn't mind so much

for myself, you know, but there are the kids, and particularly Joan. She's growing up to be such an attractive girl,"—(she was nine then)—"and we've been grooming her for a race. But if this thing breaks wrong . . ." By his look I saw how much he cared for her—a child that wasn't his! "As for Braith," he added, "he's sixteen and pretty shrewd, and it wouldn't be much trouble to see him through college. Besides, if the worst does come, he'll know what's ahead of him."

I never so much as dreamed of reporting this conversation to Al, although she must have listened to many like it. But then, as I say, came better days, though never exactly the same as before this difficulty. For there was that social let down that had come with the storm. More, Phil as well as Al had been made into a very tired man and wife—very—so that there was never the same zest or enthusiasm, as I could plainly see. For now Millerton was not only working to pay off a mass of debts, but the things which had previously inspired him to such energy, such as prospective wealth, fame, etc., were by now an old story. By that I mean the great houses on Long Island and at Palm Beach, the showy and colorful contacts with those frittering and wealthy individuals who made up his sly commercial entourage were not so interesting. Besides, as anyone could see, he was getting along in years—in his middle forties now—and by the time he should have paid off his debts and reëstablished himself, he would be years older and would still have his

fortune to make, if he wished then to have a fortune. To be sure, he had hidden away some stocks and cash, so that in case, as he said, he was incapacitated, financially or otherwise, (I think for a time he must have contemplated a term in prison), Al and the children would not be entirely without means. But assume that it was two or three or four hundred thousand dollars. How little that would have counted as against the expensive and almost wasteful life they had enjoyed!

And yet by degrees the debts eventually liquidated, in part anyhow. And once more a large country place on Long Island, a season in a sublet property at Palm Beach. But both Al and Phil no longer so greatly interested. The enormous financial strain had told. And Al, of course, smarting because of the publicity that had been. For there was no denying that now she was looked on as the wife of a "sharper" or robber, one who for a time at least had been closely verging on failure. And all this after the immense financial and social expansion which had carried them to the door of if not actually into society! And yet now all this was definitely over. And no one knowing it so well as Phil and Al.

However, as I noted, Al remained as stoical as ever. I recall her saying to me once when the storm had somewhat abated: "Phil's no worse than any of the rest, and at least he's a fighter. Actually, I like him better than ever these days. He seems a little closer to me, more dependent. And I'm never going to be dis-

loyal to him again." And she looked at me a little defiantly, I thought.

As for the children, she was most concerned about Joan. "She's so strong-willed and so attractive," she said, "and Phil is so devoted to her. Much more than he ever has been to me. It makes me half jealous at times." Joan was thirteen then and it was Albertine's idea that she must be guarded until she was eighteen or twenty. More, at this very time she was preparing to pack her off to some severe school for several years. "With her father's temperament, you know," and she gave me one of her quizzical, half-resigned, half-laughing looks.

"How about her mother?" I parried.

"Oh, don't you dare blame her on me, ever! You know how she came to be here."

But then the ensuing years. Braith, fortunately, marrying a society girl, with some little money, and retiring to play the social game. And Joan eventually coming back from school in Switzerland and plunging into a round of social gayety which finally ended in a complete break in health. For while dynamic and wildly enthusiastic, she was never strong. And wilful and with notions about freedom and her rights which were all too modern and eventually resulted in her running away from home for a week, another time for three days, and each time succeeding in creating an intense and even terrifying home situation, with detectives called in, and Millerton contemplating

some drastic way of circumventing her for a few years more—"until she can get a little more sense," as he phrased it. But no real victory as I can testify. Never in her case.

Rather I recall calling at the house one afternoon during this turmoil attending her return, and instead of finding her ashamed or humble, looking at me and actually trying to flirt with me. "Why don't you come and see *me* once in a while?" she asked, with a lingering look in her eyes.

"Never mind, Joan, I will," I replied. "But you'd better be a good girl, or I won't." I retired, a little shocked and beaten for once, you may be sure.

But beyond all that, the fateful, elapsing years. Phil getting a little fat and losing that quick, light, snappy insouciance and interest in what might be called smart dressing. And Al . . . Ah, the inroads of time! . . . growing stout, although fighting weight, but finally resignedly saying to me: "Oh, well, why fight? Phil don't mind. And I have books and my home and Joan to look after." For Joan, poor Joan, was by this time almost a hopeless invalid. Night clubs, escapades of all sorts, this, that.

"But you can't fight fate," Albertine once observed to me, calmly and philosophically. "What is to be, will be. Besides, I haven't suffered like some."

"And think of all you've done for others, Al. All the nieces and nephews and cousins you and Phil have gotten jobs for or married off well."

She sniffed. But later added: "Well, at least they can write one thing above my grave."

"What's that?" I asked.

"'She was good to her relatives.'"

"Will you let me add a line?"

"Well, what is it?"

"'She was good to me.'"

"Oh, you! You mean you were good to yourself!"

Which, after all, as I think of it now, I might announce as a fitting epitaph for me: HE WAS GOOD TO HIMSELF.

END OF VOLUME ONE

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